

The University of Chicago

POLISH POLICY OF THE CENTRAL
POWERS DURING THE
WORLD WAR

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY
OF THE DIVISION OF THE HUMANITIES IN
CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR
OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

1936

By
ELDON RAY BURKE

Private Edition, Distributed by
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PREFACE

This study approaches the problem of the Polish policy of the Central Powers from the two viewpoints of diplomacy and administration. Negotiations between Austria-Hungary and Germany and between the Central Powers and the Poles have been considered in order to determine the influence of the political leaders on the military governments. The actual administration of Poland has been examined with the desire to discover the circumstances out of which Polish opposition arose and by which Polish unity was achieved. The combined approach, it is hoped, will be sufficient to show the muddle of opinions and practices which rendered ineffective all constructive efforts of the German and Austrian leaders.

Acknowledgment is due to Professor Bernadotte E. Schmitt for his unfailing patience and advice, to Professor Louis R. Gottschalk for careful criticism of the structure of the thesis, and to Professor Eugene Anderson for his helpful suggestions with regard to source materials.



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CHAPTER I

THE POLISH QUESTION BEFORE THE CONQUEST OF RUSSIAN POLAND BY THE CENTRAL POWERS

1. The Great Powers and the Poles before August, 1914¹

The declining power of Poland as a result of the weakness of its governmental structure caused the Polish question of the eighteenth century. In 1772 by a "masterpiece of diplomacy" which averted the "threatening danger of a great war" Frederick the Great manipulated the first partition of the Polish kingdom. The subsequent partitions of 1793 and 1795 not only eliminated Poland as a member of the European circle of states but also removed the Polish question as a matter of European concern. In 1815 the Polish boundaries were fixed and for a century the Poles and their struggles were a part of the internal history of Prussia, Russia, and Austria. The Great War brought them out of their obscurity and made their problem once more an issue in the diplomacy of Europe.

The physical basis of the Polish question is to be found first of all in the fact that the Polish people were divided into three great groups by the partitioning powers. Secondly the internal situation in each country was affected by the wide distribution of the Polish population which nowhere consisted of all of the inhabitants. Thus in Prussian Poland, Poles were found in East and West Prussia, in the Grand Duchy of Posen and in Upper and Lower Silesia. The Poles in East and West Prussia and in the Grand Duchy of Posen numbered in 1914 about 1,300,000 or sixty per cent of the total population for the region. Lower Silesia was almost completely germanized, but in upper Silesia the inhabitants included 1,300,000 Poles. To these there must be added about 500,000 in various other portions of the German Empire. In Austria the Polish people were centered in Silesia and in Eastern and Western Galicia, to which the little republic of Cracow had been annexed. The total population of Austrian Poles in 1914 was

¹ A. Bruce Boswell, Poland and the Poles (London, 1919); Roman Dyboski, Outlines of Polish History (London, 1925).

about 5,100,000. The Russian portion of Great Poland comprised Congress Poland, Lithuania, and Ukrainia. It was here that the mass of the Polish people, totaling about 13,000,000, was located.

Political and economic policies resulted from this geographic and ethnographic background. Should the Polish element within Prussia, the Prussian statesmen argued, become powerful enough to endanger their leadership in the Prussian state, then Prussian hegemony within the German Empire would be imperiled. Polish weakness was necessary if Prussia was to exist. In consequence, a policy of germanization was adopted. Austrian Poland, as a result of the political vicissitudes of the Dual Monarchy, had become of vital importance, the statesmen insisted, for the continued leadership of the German element in the Austrian state. Therefore, in Austria a policy of concession and moderation was adopted. Only in Russia does it appear that the elimination of the Poles would not have radically changed the makeup of the governmental structure.

A comparatively mild policy by the Prussian government prior to 1830 had resulted in a diminution of the Polish-speaking population in all areas of Prussia to less than fifty per cent and had led to the disappearance of the Polish language from public life.² After 1830, the resurgence of German nationalism during the process of unification saw as one of its chief tasks the crushing of discordant elements, among them being the alien Pole in the Ostmark. After 1871 Bismarck became the leader of the movement to germanize the Prussian Poles. He adopted a triple program of religious persecution, cultural assimilation, and colonization. In 1872 he introduced state control of the schools in Posen. In 1873 he embarked on the famous Kulturkampf directed especially against the Catholic Poles. In 1874 he founded the Ostmarkverein, a society of civil functionaries for the propagation of German culture, and twelve years later created a highly endowed colonization commission for the purchase of land owned by Poles and the settlement on it of German emigrants. Meanwhile, the use of the Polish language was suppressed in the schools, the courts, and the administration.

For a short time after William II forced Bismarck's resignation, the Poles entertained the hope that the official anti-

²Prince Bernard von Bülow, Imperial Germany, trans. Marie A. Lewenz (New York, 1914), pp. 290-326; Ludwig Bernhard, Die Polenfrage. Der Nationalitätenkampf der Polen in Preussen (Munich and Leipzig, 1920); The Earl of Onslow, "Polish Self-help under Prussian Rule," Slavonic Review, X (1931), 126-37; Manfred Laubert, Die preussische Polenpolitik von 1772-1914 (Berlin, 1920).

Polish policy would also be discontinued. Unfortunately the rise of Pan-Germanism began to emphasize the Drang nach Osten³ and to point out the danger of a foreign element within a hundred miles of Berlin. Presently the German emperor became a partisan of the movement. In September, 1894, through his influence there was formed the Society for the support of the German element in the Eastern Provinces. With the accession of Bernard von Bülow to the chancellor's office, the ideas of Bismarck were once more accepted as the official program.⁴ Within a decade government funds for the support of the colonizing commission were increased from a hundred million to half a billion marks, and additional funds were appropriated for the use of the administrative authorities in a campaign against the Polish middle-class. The failure of these efforts resulted in an act of 1904 prohibiting the establishment of homes by Polish peasants on lands acquired from large estates. Finally in 1907 there was enacted the most extreme law of all in the Bodenkampf. This new measure provided for the expropriation and purchase of lands belonging to the Poles if these were needed for the colonization of Germans.

Contemporaneously with these attempts to reduce the importance of the Polish element in Prussia, a program of German cultural dissemination was encouraged. In 1903 an imperial academy was organized at Posen. The following year a technical high school was established in the same city. German religious instruction was given in all the schools of the region in spite of Polish opposition. Finally in 1907, coincident with the passage of the land act, there was enacted a law, popularly known as the Gagging Bill, which limited the rights of Poles to form societies and abolished their right to assemble in meetings where Polish was spoken.

The reaction to this policy was a great national resistance in Posen which tended to be reflected in all Polish lands. The peasants, who prior to this time had had little national feeling, were now aroused to opposition. Even the most loyal of all the Prussian Poles, those of Silesia, were profoundly stirred

³The term used for the historic German expansion to the east.

⁴Cf. Bülow, pp. 305-6: "No consideration must hinder us from doing all we can to maintain and strengthen German nationality in the former Polish domains. Nobody dreams of wishing to thrust our Poles outside the borders of the Prussian kingdom But it is the duty and right of the Prussian government to see that the Germans do not get driven out of the east of Germany by the Poles."

by the new movement. Polish deputies were elected in increasing numbers to the Reichstag and the Prussian Landtag. With divergent political affiliations, they united for the common cause in a parliamentary club. Their general policy was one of obstruction; in which they frequently combined with the Catholic Center, the Danes, the Alsatians, and even the Socialists against the policy of the government.

The economic phases of the movement were even more significant. Contact with German efficiency led to imitation by the Poles. In order to reduce Polish dependence on the German and Jewish money lender, a land credit association was formed. To this were added agricultural societies, organized on the German plan, which now became in a sense educational centers for the Polish peasant. Curiously enough, the success of the German government in the Bodenkampf promoted the growth of a vigorous Polish middle-class in the towns. Dispossessed land owners entered commerce and industry. To obtain capital, cooperative credit organizations were formed. A union of thirty such societies, organized under the control of one man as patron, took place in 1871. About twenty years later, Father Peter Wawrzyniak became the patron and under his vigorous leadership the membership was increased many times. Eventually the associations of agricultural and commercial societies became affiliated, so that, by 1912, a veritable network of organizations covered all of Posen and West Prussia.

The net result of the German policy, as estimated by such historians as Bernhard,⁵ was failure in so far as the immediate

⁵Bernhard, pp. 569-72, summarized the results of the Prussian-German policy. In only fifteen districts of Posen and West Prussia, during the eighteen years immediately preceding the war, were German holdings increased. In the other forty-nine districts, in spite of governmental aid, the German element declined in importance. His judgment is of considerable interest: "Der Glaube der Fiskus könne den Bodenkampf durch seine Finanzmacht entscheiden hat sich als Irrtum erwiesen. Die Geldkraft der Staatskasse wurde durch die Kreditkühnheit der Privatspekulation überboten und von Jahr zu Jahr höher überragt. Der preussische Fiskus wurde zum Spekulationsobjekt. Die Folge war: die Demoralization des östlichen Gütermarktes und schliesslich die vollständige Einkreisung der preussischen Ansiedlungskommission.

"Den Polen hingegen brachte der Kampf um den Boden eine soziale und wirtschaftliche Reorganization, erzwang sie zu einer Neuordnung ihrer ungefunden Bodenverteilung, zwang sie zu Reformen, die die alte Schlacht in Friedens Zeiten nicht geduldet

aims of the German government were concerned and worse than failure when the Polish reaction with its unifying tendencies was considered. Even Bülow was forced to admit that there was no appreciable change in the ratio of Poles to Germans and that while there was a slight increase of German land holdings, the cost was out of proportion to the result.⁶ Finally the German policy implanted in the minds of the Polish people the firm conviction that Germany was their greatest enemy. The great Polish leaders, Sienkiewicz, Paderewski, and Dmowski, frequently gave expression to such sentiments before the war.

In marked contrast to the limited occasions for political activity by the Prussian Poles were the opportunities afforded their compatriots in Austrian Poland.⁷ Contemporaneously with the transformation of the Habsburg state into a dual monarchy, a large degree of local autonomy was given the Galician Poles. Henceforth it was only with Polish aid that the German element could maintain its preponderant influence in the Austrian government. After 1868 a special minister was appointed for Galicia, who was always a Pole. A provincial diet was established, which attained the nearest approach to a national parliament to be found in prewar Poland. Organized on the basis of representation by classes it was at no time entirely democratic. It dealt with the problems of agriculture, education, health, communication and local government. The permanent executive organ of the province was a committee appointed by the diet. Matters reserved by the Austrian government were the general political oversight of the province, the army, the postal service, taxation, and the state railways. These, however, caused no conflict as the personnel of the administration was usually Polish. Only the army remained unattractive to the Poles, being a branch of the government where the German language was universally used.

In consequence, the Poles in Galicia before the Great War, as we shall see, had almost a normal political experience. Patterned after the continental mode, their political organizations ranged from radical to conservative with all intervening shades of opinion. All, however, were united in parliamentary clubs

hätte und entwickelte auf den neuen Boden das Gemeinwesen, dass den Polen als Verkörperung der slavischen Kultur in Preussen erscheint."

⁶Bülow, pp. 318-22.

⁷Friedrich F. G. Kleinwachter, Der Untergang der österreichisch-ungarischen Monarchie (Leipzig, 1920), pp. 113-29; Oscar Jaszi, The Dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy (Chicago, 1929), pp. 389-93.

when matters of general Polish interest were debated in the Austrian legislature or in the imperial Delegations. Moreover, many of the parties were affiliated with the corresponding parties in other portions of Poland.

The condition of industry and commerce showed little similarity with the rising political status of the Poles. Given an opportunity in politics, Poles of talent (drawn almost entirely from the nobility) had little interest in the economic development of Galicia. It is true that some slight effort was made by the Poles to develop the economic resources of the province, but most of the improvement came through Austrian enterprise.

The greatest service to the Polish people rendered by prewar Galicia was in the field of intellectual leadership. Through state supported schools and a Popular School Society opportunity was given for the acquisition of a general education. Special training could be obtained in the technical and commercial high schools (state supported) and in the universities. The more important university was located at Cracow, which after five hundred years' continuous existence reached its height as the intellectual center of Polish life in the period immediately preceding the Great War. A second Polish university was established at Lemberg (Lwow), which became the cultural center along the eastern border. In 1871 the Polish Academy of Science was organized at Cracow. Poles from all sections came to drink at these fountains of learning before the war and after 1918 it was from these sources that the new Poland obtained its teachers. The significance of the intellectual service of Polish Galicia to the Polish people can hardly be overestimated.

Yet the Austrian government was not entirely free of deceit in the treatment of its Polish citizens.⁸ Ukrainians especially among the peasants and constituting a majority of the inhabitants were to be found in Eastern Galicia. Following the well-known Habsburg principle, divide et impera, the Austrian government fostered Ukrainian nationalism. Ostensibly directed against Russia, it soon became a matter of deep concern for the Poles. Ukrainian secondary schools were established. Professorial chairs for Ukrainians were created at the Polish university of Lemberg. Economic and other associations were organized in

⁸B. Paneyko, "Galicia and the Polish-Ukrainian Problem," Slavonic Review, IX (1931), 567-87; S. Srokowski, "The Ukrainian Problem in Poland; a Polish View," ibid., 588-98; S. Los, "The Ukrainian Question in Poland," ibid., X (1931), 116-25; Rudolf Sieghart, Die letzten Jahrzehnte einer Grossmacht (Berlin, 1932), pp. 334-38.

competition with Polish organizations. At the outbreak of the Great War separate military units (legions), officered by Austrians, were formed. From Eastern Galicia the Austrian government hoped that the movement would spread into Russian territory.

This program, the Poles feared, concerned not only their status in Galicia, but in its broader aspects jeopardized their relative position in the Dual Monarchy. Until the Austrian government adopted this policy, the Austrian Poles were among the most loyal of the subject races of the Habsburg crown. At the outbreak of the war the older generation was still faithful, but Russophilism had begun to affect the younger generation of Austrian Poles.⁹

Comparable to the status of the Prussian Poles, but in contrast to the political freedom of the Austrian Poles, the Polish inhabitants of Russia suffered from the persecutions of a political despotism.¹⁰ Russian policy dated from the "sanguinary disillusionment" of 1863. As a result of the Polish rebellion of that year, a thorough-going reaction became the definite program of the government. All autonomous agencies were suppressed and autocracy through bureaucracy was substituted. Russian became the official language and Russians were placed in charge of public instruction. Religious persecution appeared and found violent expression in the Uniat massacres. The Polish peasant was taught by Russian officialdom to regard the Polish landlord as his enemy. In short, a complete policy of suppression and Russification was adopted.

The Polish people responded in all the ways open to them. Whenever the Russian policy wavered, they were ready to seize the opportunity for their own advancement. When barred from the public service in Poland, they found governmental positions elsewhere in the Russian Empire. They made full use of their opportunity to serve in the Duma. In spite of the open opposition of the Russian government, many of their political parties affiliated themselves with similar groups in Austrian and Russian Poland. Polish schools, Polish newspapers, Polish libraries, and after 1905 a Polish society known as the Mother of Schools fostered national feeling.

The greatest gains, however, came in agriculture and in industry. No agricultural associations were permitted until 1905.

⁹H. W. Steed, The Hapsburg Monarchy (London, 1913), pp. 291-93.

¹⁰Ludwig Gwikliński, Das Königreich Polen vor dem Kriege (1815-1914) (Vienna and Leipzig, 1917); H. Grappin, Histoire de Pologne des origines à 1922 (Paris, 1922).

In that year the Central Agricultural Society was organized. Nine years later, it embraced thirty-four regional branches and about a thousand local organizations. One result was an increase in agricultural productivity of about twenty-five per cent. A more significant gain was the rising educational standard among the peasantry which made possible the combination of the peasants with the various agencies for the development of national sentiment. Industry also found opportunity to form organizations, the most important of which were the Society for the Encouragement of Industry and Commerce, founded in 1886, and the Society of Industrials, founded four years before the outbreak of the Great War. The most eloquent testimony, however, in connection with the rising status of industry is to be found in the increased production amounting to 732 per cent in the period from 1877 to 1910.

The improved economic condition of the Russian Poles was accompanied by measures which prevented improvement in other ways. Thus Polish representation in the second Duma was reduced from thirty-six to ten deputies. As difficulty with the Russian administration arose, the Popular School Society was dissolved by the czarist government. When the Russian government purchased the railroad running from Warsaw to the Austrian border, all Poles were promptly dismissed from the service. In 1912 the province of Chelm was detached from Congress Poland and made an integral part of Russia. While these events intensified Polish national feeling, all attempts to obtain political unity were futile. "The outbreak of the World War," says a very able Polish historian, "found Russian Poland industrially still progressing and economically well organized, but politically more oppressed than ever, torn into discordant factions, all equally helpless."¹¹

Yet while Poland was thus disunited geographically and restricted politically, there were certain common forces and movements working for the achievement of national unity and political freedom. Such were the economic and political associations which, whenever possible, extended beyond the partitioning boundaries. The cultural associations, centered in the Polish universities, emphasized the cultural heritage of all Poles whether peasant or lord. The Catholic faith, which, with the exception of a few Lutherans in East Prussia, was the prevailing faith of the Poles, was also a unifying agency. Finally, all Poles had a common aspiration in a new Poland, an aspiration which was assiduously cultivated by two of the political parties, the Polish Socialist Party and the National Democratic Party.¹²

¹¹Dyboski, p. 212.

¹²C. Smogorzewski, Le jeu complexe des partis en Pologne (Paris, 1928), p. 9.

Both parties extended throughout the entire Polish area. The Polish Socialist Party had been organized in 1892 by the fusion of all of the existing socialistic organizations in Poland.¹³ Joseph Pilsudski became the moving spirit of the organization. He was less socialistic than Polish. His leading motive was the restoration of Polish independence, which he proposed to achieve by means of insurrection. Not all members of the party agreed with him and in the struggle as to whether nationalism or internationalism should be the guiding principle of the party a schism occurred. In 1908 with Casimir Sosnkowski he founded the first of a large number of secret military organizations devoted to Polish nationalism. This so-called Union of Active Struggle (Zwiazek Walki Czynnej) was legalized two years later as the Union for the Societies for Sharpshooting (Zwiazek Strzelecki). Because they opposed the socialistic principles of these societies, Maryan Januszajtis and Felix Mlynarski at about the same time formed a separate organization of Rifle Clubs (Drusyny Strzeleckie). By 1913 the united strength of the two associations comprised over three hundred local clubs and on the outbreak of the World War both groups, joined under the leadership of Pilsudski, became the nucleus of his famous legions. In the meantime Pilsudski had continued his political activities and in 1912 with the aid of his friend, Witold Jodko, had organized a Provisional Commission of Federated Independent Parties (Komisja Tymczasowa Skonfederowanych Stronnictw Niepodleglosciowych, which was abbreviated as the K. T. S. S. N.) whose chief aim was the struggle for independence.¹⁴ This association, composed particularly of the Populist and Socialist parties, was in consequence usually designated as "independentist" during the war.¹⁵

The second great party with adherents in all of the Polish territories was the National Democratic Party. Beginning as a secret Polish league (Liga polska) it became a national league (Liga narodowa) in 1894 and three years later appeared openly as the National Democratic Party.¹⁶ Roman Dmowski was the party leader. The National Democratic Party opposed the loyalists of the right as vigorously as it opposed the socialists of the left.

¹³C. Smogorzewski, Joseph Pilsudski et les activistes Polonais pendant la guerre (Paris, 1930), pp. 10, 11-13, 19.

¹⁴Vladimir Tetmajer, a Populist, was president. Ladislav Sikorski and Felix Mlynarski were the two secretaries. Sikorski has since been minister for military affairs, etc., in the Polish Republic.

¹⁵Smogorzewski, Partis, p. 17.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 10, 18.

Like Pilsudski, Dmowski was a partisan of Polish independence, but he did not believe that it could be achieved by violent means. He and his associates became known as "realists," preferring to await events and hoping to achieve national independence through the political education of the people. During the World War he was "russophil" and later "ententophil." Affiliated with the National Democratic Party were the conservatives of Eastern Galicia. Because these political groups refused to participate in the political activities inaugurated by the Central Powers, they were usually characterized as "passivist." In rivalry with Pilsudski, Dmowski organized the military companies of Bartosz (Druzyny Bartoszowe) and in 1912 formed a National Council of Parties (Rada Narodowa) seated at Lemberg.¹⁷

Opposed to both the "independentists" and the "ententophils" were those whose orientation was "austrophil." They were led by Leon Bilinski and his associates of the Cracow Conservative Party and Constantin Srokowski of the Cracow Democratic Party. Lastly, there were the "germanophils" of Polish Russia who were led by Ladislav Studnicki, "the migratory bird" of Polish politics. At the beginning of the World War all of the political groups with the exception of the "ententophils" cooperated with the Central Powers and therefore were characterized as "activist" parties. In 1915 the "independentists" separated from the other "activists" and began a policy of passive resistance to the German and Austro-Hungarian governments. In 1916 antagonism arose between the "austrophils" and "germanophils," a concomitant of the struggle for the control of the occupied areas between the statesmen of Berlin and Vienna.¹⁸

2. The Polish Diplomacy of the Central Powers during the First Year of the World War

The Great War quickly brought forth new issues connected with the Polish question. On August 6, 1914, the day of the Austrian declaration of war against Russia, Pilsudski led his rifle clubs in an unauthorized attack on Kielce (a town about seventy-five miles north-east of Cracow and well in Russian Poland). Here he established himself, seeking in the meantime to create a civil administration and hoping that a great national movement might be kindled by his action. He was doomed to failure. His attempt

¹⁷Smogorzewski, Pilsudski, p. 12.

¹⁸Smogorzewski, Partis, p. 17; Marcel Handelsman, La Pologne, sa vie économique et sociale pendant la guerre (Paris and New Haven, U.S.A., 1933), pp. 137-44.

was premature. "We tried," the great Polish leader declared later, "to show our fellow-countrymen that it was sane and reasonable to shed our blood for ourselves, not for others."¹⁹

At 7:00 P.M. on that same August 6, Conrad von Hötzenndorf, chief of staff of the Austro-Hungarian army, was visited by Leon Biliński, the joint minister of finance.²⁰ Being a Pole, the latter was much concerned as to the future of his people and in the interview with Conrad sought to discover what attitude the general would take in regard to the formation of a united Poland. Conrad tried to evade the question by saying that no one could predict the outcome of the war, but on being pressed grudgingly admitted that probably a change in the construction of the monarchy might be necessary. On the next day a general ministerial council was held, attended by Count Berchtold, the Austro-Hungarian foreign minister, Count Hoyos, his chef de cabinet, Baron Burián, the Hungarian minister of agriculture (Count Tisza, the Hungarian premier, could not be present), and Biliński. The consensus of opinion favored the granting of concessions to the Poles. Burián was inclined to limit the arrangement to be made by demanding in the name of Hungary that the principle of dualism should not be endangered. The agreement reached provided for the issuance of a manifesto (to be written by Berchtold) in which the Poles would be promised unity and autonomy.²¹

A second ministerial council dealing with the Polish question took place on August 12 in which Berchtold, Biliński, Dr. Leo, president of Polish political clubs of Galicia, and Conrad participated.²² The discussion centered around the problem of Polish

¹⁹ Joseph Pilsudski, The Memories of a Polish Revolution-ary and Soldier, trans. and ed. by D. R. Gillie (London, 1930), pp. 184-88.

²⁰ Feldmarschall Conrad, Aus meiner Dienstzeit 1906-1918 (Vienna, Leipzig, Munich, 1925), IV, 184.

²¹ Leon Biliński, Wspomnienia i Dokumenty 1846-1919 (Warsaw, 1924), I, 304.

²² W. Recke, Die Polnische Frage als Problem der Europäischen Politik (Berlin, 1927), p. 198 seems to confuse this cabinet meeting in some details with the one previously held. For the previous meeting he gives the date of August 8, but Conrad, IV, 184, says that it was held on August 7. Recke also says that Conrad was present at the first meeting but Conrad gives no evidence of his presence, a fact which is supported by the evidence of Biliński, I, 303. Evidently Recke has transferred Conrad's activity in the meeting of August 12 in part to the

boundaries and the related question of Ukrainian independence. Conrad remarked, "You had better wait until we have Poland." To this Biliński replied that the Polish people must soon be informed of the plan for Polish autonomy if the Dual Monarchy was to obtain any Polish legions. Two proclamations had been prepared, the one by Biliński and the other by the foreign minister. Agreeing on the Biliński version, which proposed Polish parity with Austria and Hungary if the Central Powers won the war, the ministers proceeded to plan for its promulgation.²³ Again Conrad reminded his associates that the Russians were still in Poland. Thereupon Berchtold suggested that Germany should be consulted. The suggestion was adopted, as will be seen later, and thus a new factor entered the situation.

Conrad was particularly interested in that phase of the question which involved the creation of a Polish volunteer army. Forgetting his previous caution, he urged that in the event of a favorable outcome of the war for the Central Powers, the Polish army should be combined with the Austro-Hungarian forces. Biliński would not consent to this arrangement and suggested instead that a Polish Landwehr be established. This, in turn, Conrad deplored, for a Polish Landwehr would mean chaos. The necessity of permitting the creation of the Polish legions was recognized by everyone present, but the Austrian officials, in spite of the feeling of the Poles to the contrary, decided to grant the same privilege to the Ukrainians. The size of the Polish military establishment was to be limited and its members were to take the ordinary Landsturm oath.

On the following day Dr. Leo, the Polish leader, requested Conrad to form three legions, at Cracow, Lemburg, and Warsaw respectively. At the same time he asked that the customs barriers against the Poles should be removed.²⁴ In a conference with Count Karl Stürgkh, the Austrian premier, he presented the same

August 7 meeting. Cf. Conrad, IV, 206-7; Neue Freie Presse, August 12, 1914.

²³Biliński, pp. 305-6. The essential paragraph of the proclamation was as follows: "If God Almighty grants victory to the allied powers, then will your land be inseparably incorporated in my empire, and indeed in the manner, which is common in my lands that are occupied by their countrymen, a unified Polish kingdom will be created whose administration, in consideration of the highest interests and needs of the monarchy, I will entrust to a national government which shall be responsible to a sejm in Warsaw."

²⁴Conrad, IV, 208.

measures. In each case he was favorably received and with the firm belief that a new day was dawning for the Poles, he returned to Cracow to organize the Polish political parties in support of the Habsburg government.²⁵ Yet on the day of Leo's departure Berchtold ordered Conrad not to establish any Polish legions, but to distribute the possible volunteers in the Landsturm.²⁶

Evidently the wavering policy of the government was in no small measure a result of the determined opposition of Tisza. Through Burián, as we have seen, he had announced that any proposed Polish policy must not affect the dualistic system. In a letter of instruction to Burián on August 11 he had explained his fear that the granting of autonomy to a united Poland within the Dual Monarchy would result in the creation of a bloc of twenty million people opposed to Hungary. The existence of Poland in the monarchy under such circumstances would destroy the prevailing balance between Hungary and Austria and from the point of view of Hungary was unthinkable.²⁷ The fears of the Hungarian statesmen were well grounded. The Biliński proclamation, if it had been carried through, would have substituted trialism for dualism as the basic principle of the Habsburg monarchy. Realizing that the Hungarian statesman would object, Biliński had obtained an audience of the Emperor Francis Joseph even before the cabinet meeting of August 12 and had procured his sanction to the draft proclamation.²⁸ Tisza, on learning of the proclamation, went immediately to Vienna determined to stop the proposed action. In a conference held in Berchtold's office (at which no one sat down!) Tisza declared that the Emperor himself did not have the power to change the structure of the monarchy.²⁹ Subsequently in a general ministerial council held for the purpose of promulgating the proclamation, he stoutly maintained his position and refused to sign the document. As a result the belief has arisen that the proposed action was effectually blocked by the Hungarian statesman.³⁰ Such was not entirely the case. Unquestionably his attitude had a definite influence, but another factor had entered the situation. On August 12 Berchtold had stated that he would consult Germany. This he apparently did. In a letter of August 28, written by

²⁵Neue Freie Presse, August 13, 1914.

²⁶Conrad, IV, 211-12, 213. The order was subsequently modified, permitting Polish legions under Austrian commanders.

²⁷Stefan Tisza, Briefe 1914-1918, ed. and trans. Oskar von Wertheimer (Berlin, 1928), pp. 51-2.

²⁸Biliński, pp. 305-6.

²⁹Recke, pp. 198-99.

³⁰Robert Macray, Poland, 1914-31 (London, 1932), p. 49.

Tisza to Forgách, Tisza, while he complained of the wording of the German note (apparently in reply to the Austrian query in regard to Poland), expressed his satisfaction that the Germans had "thrown cold water on the proposition."³¹ At all events the publication of the manifesto was postponed, and this meant that all thought of such a pronouncement was abandoned.³²

Concurrently with Biliński's attempt to secure for his compatriots an independent and united status, there arose the problem of administering the territories acquired by conquest from Russia. In mid-August the Austro-Hungarian government began to consider the problem. Conrad, in audience with the Emperor on August 15, recommended General Hermann von Colard for the position of military administrator of the occupied areas.³³ Sanctioned by the Emperor, the matter was debated in the council. Contrary to Conrad's desires, Berchtold insisted that a civil administration be established, and eventually the matter was compromised by the appointment of Michel Bobyrzinski (a former viceroy of Galicia) as the representative of the foreign office in the new administration. It was planned that the seat of the new government should be, in turn, at Cracow, Kielce, Radom and finally Warsaw. It was a very optimistic program, as the Austrian army failed to advance, and the Germans forthwith demanded Warsaw and its environs as their share of the proposed spoils. Conrad, very wisely from the point of view of Austro-German relations, counseled postponement of all settlement until the close of the war. This policy, however, was not adopted, and thenceforth throughout the war the diplomatists were constantly concerned with the ticklish problem of delimiting German and Austro-Hungarian spheres of interest in Poland.³⁴

3. The Expression of German and Austrian Policy in Poland during the First Year of the War

German policy in Polish Prussia during the months from September, 1914, to August, 1915, generally speaking, paralleled the policy of the Habsburg government. The first deviation from the pre-war policy came from the Prussian government with the appointment of Edward Lekowski, a Polish scholar and theologian, to

³¹Tisza, p. 65.

³²Handelsman, p. 26.

³³Conrad, p. 399.

³⁴Ibid., p. 479.

the archepiscopal see of Posen on August 12.³⁵ On the following day a lengthy pastoral letter was issued by the new appointee, urging the Prussian Poles to stand by the Central Powers. The appointment and the letter were given wide publicity by newspapers of all shades of opinion and were recognized as a strategic move on the part of the government to win Polish sympathy and support during the war. A hint in the letter that, in the event of German victory, the expectation would be that Polish demands would be satisfied, led to comments by several editors to the effect that a new Polish policy was demanded.³⁶ Lekowski's installation on September 24 was made an occasion for the development of further pro-German sentiment. Yet, in the inaugural speech of the new bishop is to be found an undertone of Polish feeling. In spite of this, however, the commanding general published it broadcast along the eastern front in order to persuade the Poles to support Germany in driving out the "Russian barbarians" who would, he said, "make serfs of them."³⁷

Another phase of German policy is shown by the suppression of Polish newspapers and the handling of Polish news in the German press. On August 9 the commander of the 17th Army Corps suspended the publication of all Polish newspapers. Later permission to publish in German or permission to circulate in a pre-

³⁵Vorwärts, August 12, 1914; Berliner Tageblatt, August 13, 1914; Neue Preussische Zeitung, August 12, 1914; Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger, August 12, 1914; Schlessische Zeitung, August 13, 1914.

³⁶Schlessische Zeitung, August 14, 1914; Berliner Lokal-Anzeiger, August 13, 1914; Neue Preussische Zeitung, August 14, 1914; Berliner Tageblatt, August 13, 1914; Vorwärts, August 13, 1914. In the issue of Vorwärts for August 14, a short article urged a change in the Polish policy of the German Empire, as this incident indicated that the need for such a change was recognized by the authorities. The Prussian conservatives, it was declared, took the Polish distrust too lightly, and the article urged that the government take some action to show the Poles that their lack of confidence in the German government was unwarranted.

³⁷Neue Preussische Zeitung, September 25, 1914 (special war edition); Pester Lloyd, September 17, 1914; Neue Preussische Zeitung, September 14, 1914; Vorwärts, September 14, 1914. In a congratulatory telegram the German chancellor had declared that "die gesamte Bevölkerung der Erzdiocese unterschiedlos dem Rufe des Kaisers gefolgt sei," to which Vorwärts caustically replied: "Bekanntlich besteht diese Bevölkerung zum überwiegenden Teile aus Polen."

scribed area was granted. Occasionally publication was completely suppressed, and in a few instances the resumption of complete publication and circulation was permitted.³⁸ To combat the influence of the Polish newspapers, the high command established a war newspaper of its own. This paper, the Gazeta Wojenna, carried articles of a semi-historical nature in order to show that Polish and German interests were identical.³⁹ In the German press, Polish material received a distinctly German bias. Thus expressions on the part of the Poles favoring the Central Powers were emphasized, while such items as the Polish movement for independence in Galicia were reported as patriotic manifestations of the Poles in favor of the Dual Monarchy. Mention of Pilsudski's name was carefully avoided, even though he was at this time attacking Kielce. The general tone of the German press was that the Poles were united in their support of the Central Powers and that the Polish response to Russian propaganda was very slight. In view of the censorship of the press, particularly in regard to war aims, then in force, it would appear that the attitude of the press was a result of official pressure.⁴⁰

A more reliable index of German policy is found in the administrative procedure in Prussian Poland. While the question of abrogating the laws discriminating against the Poles (which had been strengthened just before the outbreak of the war) was debated in the German Reichstag, the government tried to win the Poles to their support by deliberate laxness in the enforcement of these laws. The readmission of Polish religious instruction into the schools of Posen, the giving of Polish prayer books to Polish soldiers,⁴¹ and the use of Polish as the official language in the conquered areas of Russian Poland were distinct steps thrown

³⁸This was the situation in spite of the ordinance of August 18 which announced that as a result of the "patriotic attitude of the Poles" Polish newspapers might be published in the Polish language.

³⁹Vorwärts, October 6, 1914; Pester Lloyd, October 4, 1914. The leading article of the first issue of the Gazeta Wojenna bore the caption, "Deutschlands Sieg bedeutet Polens Freiheit! Russlands Sieg Polens Untergang."

⁴⁰R. H. Lutz, Fall of the German Empire (Stanford University, California, 1932), I, 184-85.

⁴¹Pester Lloyd, October 3, 1914; ibid., November 25, 1914; Count Theodor Batthyany, Für Ungarn-gegen Hohenzollern (Zurich, Leipzig, and Vienna, 1930), p. 134.

to Polish public opinion.⁴² Summarizing the tolerant policy adopted towards the Poles by the Central Powers, the Pester Lloyd declared:⁴³

"The Polish Social Democrat newspapers may henceforth be sold in all of the railway stations of Germany. Polish meetings occur without police supervision. Today, one can draw a deep breath while the Polish speech is clearly respected in the schools, in the offices and in politics." It was an over-statement and probably never was realized at any time during the war.

The primary aim of Austro-Hungarian policy during the early months of the war was to win the whole-hearted support of the subject nationalities. An account has already been given of the attempt made by Biliński to win for the Poles a status similar to that enjoyed by the Hungarians in the Dual Monarchy. His failure to obtain the issuance of the decree granting the Poles such a position did not prevent the development by the Austrian administration in Poland of a policy professedly pro-Polish. The favored treatment which the Galician Poles had previously received made this a comparatively easy matter at the outset. Immediately after the outbreak of the war, Polish nationalistic organizations in Galicia had issued enthusiastic proclamations in favor of the Dual Monarchy.⁴⁴ To encourage their loyalty the commander-in-chief, the Archduke Joseph, on August 8 issued a proclamation in which he declared that his army was bringing them deliverance from the "Muscovite yoke" and in a flow of glittering generalities promised the Poles liberty, tolerance, and justice.⁴⁵

But it was primarily through the manipulation of the Polish parties that the Vienna government sought to control Polish opinion. The Cracow conservatives were urged into intimate co-operation with the government of Vienna. On August 9 at Lemberg a conference of Polish leaders agreed to form an executive committee to head the political movement in Galicia. The chairman of this committee, Dr. Leo, as we have seen, was called to Vienna and met with the ministers of the Dual Monarchy when they discussed the Polish question on August 12. His favorable reception

⁴²Pester Lloyd, October 6, 1914. Information on the territories held is given on pp. 74-75.

⁴³Ibid., September 26, 1914.

⁴⁴Schlessische Zeitung, August 3 and 4, 1914.

⁴⁵S. Filasiewicz, La question polonaise pendant la guerre mondiale (Paris, 1920, No. 2; Neue Freie Presse, August 9, 1914; Pester Lloyd, August 9, 1914. The Germans issued a similar proclamation.

in Vienna persuaded him of the honesty of the Habsburg policy and he returned to Cracow devoted to the cause of the Central Powers. His efforts resulted in the formation on August 16 of a union of the chief parties of Galicia under the Supreme National Committee (Naczelny Komitet Narodowy).⁴⁶

The Supreme National Committee representing all the political organizations of Galicia had as its immediate task the development of a Polish volunteer army in support of the Dual Monarchy. In a proclamation to the Polish people the committee stated its aims and asked their loyal support.⁴⁷ Yet the committee's attitude was not one of subserviency. If a Polish army was created, it was to be under Polish commanders. To protect Polish interests a committee of four men was sent to the capital. Although the evidence is scanty, their influence is observable in the more favorable action of the Austro-Hungarian government with reference to the legions. The order which eventually appeared on August 27 decreed that the commanders of the legions should be two generals of Polish extraction. These officers were to be obedient to the desires of the Supreme National Committee, though the Austro-Hungarian high command was to have final authority. The two legions formed were to accept volunteers from Russian Poland, but Galician recruits were to be limited to those who were not otherwise liable for military service. Polish was to be the language of command. Subordinate officers were to be elected. Pilsudski's riflemen were to be enrolled as the first regiment of the first legion with Pilsudski in command. The Landsturm oath, swearing loyalty to the emperor, was to be taken by all members.⁴⁸

Representing compromise with the Supreme National Committee, the decision of the Habsburg authorities with respect to the legions represented victory over the movement for independence. Pilsudski's dramatic effort at Kielce had been anxiously followed by both friends and foes of the Polish cause. It was reported in the German press with all details lacking as a patriotic effort of Polish youth in support of Austria-Hungary.⁴⁹ Gradually the true nature of the movement began to appear in the press reports. On August 17 Pilsudski's proclamation of the establishment of a national Polish state, seated at Warsaw, appeared in the Pester Lloyd. On August 28 he announced the control of this national

⁴⁶Neue Freie Presse, August 12, 13, and 18, 1914; Pester Lloyd, August 18, 1914; Conrad, IV, 206-7, 208; Filasiewicz, pp. 7-8.

⁴⁷Pester Lloyd, August 17, 1918; Handelsman, p. 27.

⁴⁸Filasiewicz, No. 4, pp. 8-11.

⁴⁹Neue Freie Presse, August 10, 11, and 12, 1914.

state over the city and surrounding territory of Kielce. Three days later a brief notice summarized his failure in the statement that the government of Kielce had now been taken over by the agencies of the Vienna government.⁵⁰

Independence had failed, but the Vienna government had not won the enthusiastic support of the Polish soldiers. Pilsudski now consented to the enrollment of his men in the legions only because his effort to begin a movement for independence had been abortive. Controversy arose between the Poles of the National Committee and the Austro-Hungarian government in regard to the oath which was to be required of the legionaries. The committee had requested that the oath contain the words "to fight for the liberty of Poland." When the oath was administered about half of the legions preferred to return to their homes.⁵¹ Nevertheless, the official attitude remained favorable, and while Conrad secretly considered them little more than "cannon fodder," the statesmen of the Dual Monarchy publicly lauded them whenever possible.⁵²

Despite the outwardly favorable attitude of the Austrian government, the Poles remained lukewarm in their support of the Habsburgs. One cause was the continuation of the Ukrainian policy of the Dual Monarchy. The Ukrainians were encouraged to rebel against the Russian government. They were aided in the organization of political committees and other nationalistic organizations. Their soldiers were organized separately as legions in much the same way as the Poles had been organized. Very early these manifestations of Ukrainian nationalism became a source of anxiety to the Polish leaders, and presently it helped to spread dissatisfaction among the members of the Supreme National Committee.⁵³ Another cause of dissatisfaction on the part of the Poles was a dispute with the military authorities over the control of certain military stores in Congress Poland. On November 8, 1914, four of the nine parties retired from the organization of which

⁵⁰Pester Lloyd, August 17, 29, 30, and 31, 1914; Vorwärts, August 28, 1914.

⁵¹Pilsudski, p. 184; Recke, p. 200.

⁵²Conrad, IV, 878; Pester Lloyd, September 10, 23, October 5, 16, and 26, 1914; Filasiewicz, p. 5; Berliner Tageblatt, August 18, 21, 22, 25, 27, and 30, 1914. The Habsburg government claimed belligerent status for them when the Russian government announced that, if captured, they would be shot as "enemies of Slavism."

⁵³Pester Lloyd, September 2, 4, 5, 10, 19, December 5, and 21, 1914; Kölnische Volkszeitung, October 1, 1914.

the Supreme National Committee was the head. Lack of unanimity was given as the cause of their retirement.⁵⁴

4. Theories and Beliefs of the Leaders of the Central Powers with Respect to the Polish Question

The most ardent protagonist of Polish nationalism in the governmental circles of the Central Powers was naturally the Polish leader, Leon Biliński, Austro-Hungarian minister of finance. In common with the Cracow conservatives he desired to win for his people a status similar to what Hungary enjoyed in the Habsburg monarchy. He was loyal to the Habsburgs and later expressed the belief that the ultimate dissolution of the Dual Monarchy was a result in part of their failure to adopt his idea of autonomy for Poland within the Habsburg empire.⁵⁵ We have seen how he attempted on the outbreak of the war to obtain this concession for Poland and how the publication of the proclamation was indefinitely delayed through the activity of Tisza and the pressure which seems to have come from Germany.

Biliński's great opponent, Count Tisza, was determined to prevent Polish aggrandisement, a development which to his mind would mean the diminution of Hungarian influence. In a letter of August 11, 1914, Tisza elaborated his reasons for opposing the unification of Poland under the Habsburg government.⁵⁶ The establishment of an independent Poland, he said, would first of all mean the loss of Galicia, which would be transformed from a strong support of the Austrian government into a hostile element. Hungary, he further maintained, could permit the absorption of Russian Poland only if "dualism and parity" were retained. To balance Austria, augmented by Russian Poland, a counter-weight would have to be established by the addition of a Ruthenian-Polish bloc to Hungary, but this, Count Tisza insisted, would be hazardous not only from the point of view of Hungary, but also from the standpoint of the position of the Habsburg monarchy among the Great Powers. Moreover, declared the Hungarian statesman, the problem of leadership would be very difficult because of the necessity of understanding conditions not only in the new area but in the monarchy as a whole. Would it not be better to present

⁵⁴Filasiewicz, pp. 7-8. The Poles insisted that such items as military stores should be handled by the Austrian government only in cooperation with the Supreme National Committee.

⁵⁵Jaszi, p. 390.

⁵⁶Tisza, pp. 51-52.

the Austro-Hungarian leaders of the future with a state so constituted that the course of its political development could be directed by cooperation with the Austro-German element?

If Bukovina and Galicia, the statesman continued, were separated from the monarchy, the Germans would lose the aid of the Poles in meeting the attacks of the Czechs and the South Slavs. The resultant anarchy in Austria would overthrow all previous arrangements. The Poles would develop into a strong Slav nation which for lack of leadership favorable to the existing arrangements would evolve into a hostile state, whose strongest bond of union would be the common hatred of Hungary. But not only was there a possibility of destroying the balance within Austria, there was also the probability that the relative strength of Hungary in the Dual Monarchy would be diminished. In order to retain the present balance between Austria and Hungary it would be necessary, if Poland were added to Austria, to annex twenty million Ruthenians to Hungary. But the addition of forty million people to the monarchy even under such circumstances would destroy the prevailing relationship as the relative size of the population of Hungary and Austria would be changed from a percentage of forty-two for Hungary and fifty-eight for Austria to a percentage of thirty-seven and sixty-three respectively. Finally there were two privileges which Hungary could not surrender, namely the right of imperial election and the control of foreign affairs.

Tisza's opponent in Hungary was the historian and statesman, Count Julius Andrassy. He was convinced that the war would weaken the monarchy unless Slav grievances were disposed of early and without friction.⁵⁷ With respect to Poland he was, therefore, a definite protagonist of trialism. "A sovereign state," he declared after the war, "should have been created out of Galicia and Russian Poland, on whose throne the Polish people should have placed our ruler. Instead of a Dual Monarchy, we would have gained a Triple Monarchy." Austrian hegemony, he believed, would disappear in the reorganized empire as Polish interests would naturally cause the Poles to ally with Hungary. He was unable to persuade Hungary's premier of the correctness of his views and he found equal difficulty in convincing the Austrian leaders. The latter, he declared, desired a Poland economically dependent on Austria and not one which they would have to buy from time to time with difficult negotiations. Only those least interested in sectional politics seem to have approved his ideas, namely, the

⁵⁷ Count Julius Andrassy, Diplomacy and the War (London, 1921), pp. 145-50. For other phases of Hungarian opinion, see Batthyany, pp. 128-37.

Emperor Francis Joseph and his successor Charles.⁵⁸

Berchtold during his short term as foreign minister seems to have taken his ideas largely from those nearest to him. Writing to Conrad, while still in the foreign office, he assented to the viewpoint of Prince Hohenlohe that the establishment of an independent Poland would be inimical to Austrian interests.⁵⁹ His successor, Count Burián, appointed through the good office of Count Tisza, adhered at first to Tisza's viewpoint. Later he became an enthusiastic believer in the "Austro-Polish" solution, that is, a Poland unified and autonomous within the Habsburg monarchy. He admitted Tisza's argument with regard to dualism, but he believed that these difficulties could be overcome if Poland were closely bound to the monarchy as a result of the wishes of the Polish people. The Polish policy of Austria-Hungary ought to conform, he believed, not only to the political and military demands of the war but also to the necessity of assuring the existence of the monarchy. If Poland were freed from Russian rule, the territorial status quo of the monarchy could not be maintained, because Polish national life existed and had developed only in Galicia, and, in consequence, Galicia must either draw the new Poland to herself or follow the destiny of the new Poland. A middle solution would have no permanence. A condominium with Germany would cause division between the allies as each sought for control. This could be prevented by giving Poland to Germany, but that, the foreign minister declared, would mean the loss of Galicia, would embitter Poland against Austria-Hungary, jeopardize the possibility of success in the war, and be contrary to the century-old tradition of the monarchy.⁶⁰ Count Stürgkh, the Austrian premier, on the other hand, was not interested in developing a policy of his own but rather adapted his plans to circumstances.⁶¹ His successors in office followed his example. General Conrad, as we have seen, desired to postpone the decision until the close of the war. Indeed, it may be said in summary of the aims and attitudes of the leading statesmen of Austria-Hungary, that the government of the Dual Monarchy was on this issue a house divided against itself.

Neither were the German leaders able to unite on a policy.

⁵⁸Edward Ritter von Steinitz, Erinnerungen an Franz Joseph I (Berlin, 1931), p. 164.

⁵⁹Conrad, V, 217.

⁶⁰Stephan Graf Burian, Drei Jahre aus der Zeit meiner Amtsführung im Kriege (Berlin, 1923), pp. 63-65.

⁶¹Joseph Maria Baernreither, Fragments of a Political Diary, ed. Joseph Redlich (London, 1930), p. 235.

They usually agreed that the Austrian suggestions could not be permitted, but just what should be done with Poland they could not decide. Germany very early in the war thought of the annexation of some of the Baltic provinces of Russia. If this had been done, in view of the control which Germany already exercised along the Baltic, any Polish nation which would have been established would have had no access to the sea and would have been a source of grave difficulty in the future.⁶² Gradually the opinion developed that if Germany was forced to concede Alsace-Lorraine to the Entente, then Germany must find compensation in the east. "The great sacrifices this war has cost Germany must be made good by economic compensations. This can only be done by making the great conquered districts in the east subservient to Germany's interests."⁶³ It was by this reasoning that the German Chancellor Bethmann-Hollweg found a basis for opposition to Austria-Hungary. After the war he expressed more clearly the ideas which motivated himself and his colleagues.⁶⁴ Germany, the chancellor declared, was bearing the burden of the war and could not give the lion's share of the spoils to Austria. Nor could Germany permit the menace to her economic and political interests which would result if Austrian territory were to extend along her eastern front and almost surround Silesia, especially since the Czech and Polish populations in the neighboring state would be hostile. To this must be added the probable effect on the Danubian monarchy of permitting the Poles to become the deciding factor in the government.

On the other hand, Bethmann believed that the annexation of ten million Poles would not strengthen but weaken Germany. It was better, he thought, to create an independent Poland, closely allied with Germany. The final solution should be postponed until the close of the war. The Kaiser, however, while he recognized the difficulty of peace negotiations with Russia should the Austro-Polish solution be adopted, nevertheless was not blind to

⁶²F. A. Golder, Documents of Russian History, 1914-17 (New York, 1927), p. 45. This was the idea of Jagow, the foreign minister.

⁶³Windischgraetz, p. 106; Die Ursachen des deutschen Zusammenbruches im Jahr 1918 (Berlin, 1929), XII, 43-47; Friedrich Payer, Von Bethmann Hollweg bis Ebert (Frankfort am Main, 1923), pp. 229-38.

⁶⁴Theodor von Bethmann-Hollweg, Betrachtungen zum Weltkriege (Berlin, 1921), Part II, pp. 88-91; Alfred Krauss, Die Ursachen unserer Niederlage. Erinnerungen und Urteile aus dem Weltkrieg (Munich, 1920), p. 85.

the advantages that would accrue if it were possible to rally the Poles in support of the Central Powers.⁶⁵

It was the desire of obtaining the active aid of the Poles which dominated the minds of the German military leaders. Generals Ludendorff, Hindenburg, von Beseler and others held this opinion, as early as 1915, although after the failure of the Polish policy they blamed the politicians.⁶⁶ Thus the chief of staff, General Falkenhayn, later, maintained that it would be impossible to make peace with Russia if an independent Poland were established. He claims that he opposed and effectively checked the announcement of the new Polish state, but the facts, as we shall see, are contrary to his account. Hindenburg believed that the Polish question should be handled in a "dilatatory fashion." He feared that the Germanophobe attitude of the Poles, if they were organized in an independent state, would threaten the alliance of the Central Powers. Ludendorff, on the other hand, admitted that he hoped a policy favorable to the Poles would result in the creation of a Polish army in support of the German cause. But in any contingency, the German military leaders were prepared to demand frontier rectification, frequently of such an extent as to be in effect another partition.

In conclusion, it must be said that no agreement on policy was reached during the first year of the war or even later. The failure of the leaders of the Central Powers in this respect was a result of the conflicting interests of the political units involved, and because those interests were so divergent as to make agreement without considerable pressure impossible. Administrative demands were met by the different agencies, in spite, rather than as a result of the policy evolved by the two great powers. A criticism of the Crown Prince is of interest. "The policy of the government was uncertain," he declared, "being almost invariably harsh where it ought to have been yielding and yielding where it ought to have been firm."⁶⁷

⁶⁵August von Cramon, Unser österreichisch-ungarischer Bundesgenosse im Weltkriege (Berlin, 1922), p. 121.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 122; Eric von Falkenhayn, General Headquarters and Its Critical Decisions (London, 1919), p. 276; Max von Hoffmann, The War of Lost Opportunities, trans. A. E. Chamot (London, 1924), p. 154; Paul von Hindenburg, Aus Meinen Leben (Leipzig, 1920), pp. 221-22; Eric von Ludendorff, Meine Kriegserinnerungen 1914-1918 (Berlin, 1919), pp. 312-18.

⁶⁷William, Memoirs of the Crown Prince of Germany (New York, 1922), p. 110. A discussion of the actual administration of Poland during war is given in chapter iv.

Yet the policy of the Central Powers during the first year of the war was not wholly mistaken. The leaders desired peace and quiet in the Polish areas in order to bring the war as soon as possible to a decisive conclusion. In this they succeeded. They hoped to raise a Polish volunteer army. Here the results were negligible. For there had already appeared a marked Polish dissatisfaction the fruit of which was to be harvested in the years to come.

CHAPTER II

THE ATTEMPT OF THE CENTRAL POWERS TO FORMULATE A POLISH POLICY AFTER THE CONQUEST OF RUSSIAN POLAND: THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PROVISIONAL COUNCIL OF STATE

1. The Diplomatic Background of the "Kingdom of Poland"

On October 20, 1914, the German advance was checked by the Russian armies before Warsaw. By mid-December the Central Powers had been forced back to Cracow. In January, 1915, they began the counter drive in order to regain the lost territory. In anticipation of the conquest of Russian Poland, they signed conventions partitioning the area. The most important of these were made at Posen on January 10 and at Katowicz on April 22.¹ Thus, by mid-April, 1915, the leaders of Germany and Austria recognized the need of formulating a Polish policy. On August 5, the German armies entered Warsaw.

The first question facing the statesmen of the two governments was whether the inhabitants of Congress Poland should be treated as a freed or a conquered people. No official decision was ever made on this point, but in practice the Poles were handled as if conquered, and at the same time were told that they were free. A second question was whether the problem of Poland and the Poles should be considered by all the powers and thus be an issue for international settlement or whether it should be treated as a matter of internal policy by the Central Powers.² The latter point of view was adopted.

The military conquest of all of Russian Poland which followed upon the capture of Warsaw led also to a question of prestige. Immediately on the taking of the city Count Burian, the Austrian foreign minister, had requested the establishment of a joint administration by the Central Powers, but his request was denied by the Germans for "reasons of prestige and the practical administration of the area." A week later the German chancellor,

¹Filasiewicz, pp. 15-17, 22.

²Burian, pp. 62, 66-67, 70, 71.

in a statement specifically disavowing German interest in Poland, argued that the increase of Slavism in the Dual Monarchy would diminish the importance of the German element in Austria. German prestige demanded not only the control of Warsaw but also that Austrian influence should not be augmented without a corresponding increase in German authority.

The first discussion of a practical plan for the administration of the occupied area occurred between the representatives of Germany and Austria-Hungary at Teschen on September 13 and 14.³ It was decided that in order to establish a liaison between the two sections of Poland, an Austro-Hungarian officer should be attached to the German governor-general in Warsaw and that a German representative should be sent to the military government at Lublin. Because of the size and importance of Warsaw the Austro-Hungarian foreign office was to be represented by an additional delegate in that city. Other arrangements provided for the entry of German and Austrian citizens into the occupied zone and for the regulation of communication between the two areas.

In the course of the negotiations, the official German attitude with regard to Poland was not clearly defined.⁴ The German diplomats claimed that Germany was not interested in the acquisition of territory. The German military authorities, on the contrary, soon began to manifest a strong desire to keep a permanent foothold in Poland. Evidently the German government at this time was attempting to clarify its policy and with the actual acquisition of Poland was being faced by all the arguments which the acquisitively minded could present. Thus Ludendorff gives an account of the activity of Dr. Sering, a confidential advisor of the government, who during the period under discussion, travelled widely within the confines of Russian Poland and who after discussion with Polish leaders and study concluded that the "Anschluss dieses neuen polnischen Staates an Deutschland für das polnische Wirtschaftsleben grössere Vorteile biete, als der an Österreich-Ungarn."⁵

³This was followed by a meeting on December 14, 1915, between the representatives of the two powers in Berlin where further details were elaborated.

⁴Filasiewicz, No. 24, pp. 36-39; Bertrand Auerbach, L'Austriche et la Hongrie pendant la guerre depuis le début des hostilités jusqu'à la chute de la monarchie (Août 1914--November 1918) (Paris, 1925), p. 388; Gustav Gratz and Richard Schüller, Die aussere Wirtschaftspolitik Österreich-Ungarns. Die mitteleuropäischen Plane (Vienna, 1925), pp. 210-11; Burian, pp. 73-76.

⁵Ludendorff, Urkunden, pp. 297-98; Recke, pp. 250-51; Handelsman, p. 27; Burian, p. 71.

This point of view was supported by the development of annexionist sentiment within the German empire. On May 20, 1915, a memorandum, signed by six economic organizations was presented to the government. A month later, a petition, signed by 352 professors and 1,371 intellectuals was submitted. On December 9, resolutions urging annexation were presented by the "bourgeois" parties of the Reichstag to that body. There was some opposition from those who said that such a large number of Poles could not be absorbed in the empire, and from the industrial and mining groups who feared the competition which might come from Poland.⁶ On November 11, 1915, the German Chancellor informed Burian that public opinion was making it extremely difficult for Germany to adopt an Austro-Polish solution.⁷ Five months later, the Austrians were officially notified of a change in the policy of the German government. German public opinion, declared Bethmann, had convinced him that the transfer of Poland to the Dual Monarchy was not expedient; Austria-Hungary had a better chance of obtaining territorial acquisitions elsewhere. A better solution, Bethmann thought, would be to make Poland an autonomous buffer state dependent on Germany. Thus, nine months after the conquest of Russian Poland, the German government was openly urging its claims to the conquered territory.

Count Burian immediately expressed the Austrian objections to the German suggestion. Poland, he said, if organized as the Germans proposed, would on account of her dissatisfaction become a center of Russian agitation. This would make Galicia a problem for the monarchy. The Germans countered with the suggestion that the Polish crown might be given to an Austrian archduke, and that Austria-Hungary might be compensated for any economic losses by being given some of the industrial areas in southern Poland. Burian refused to accept the suggestion.⁸

But by July the foreign minister of the Dual Monarchy was forced to agree to the German viewpoint. This was a result of the changing military fortunes of the Austro-Hungarian government. The offensive in the west during the spring of 1916 and the Austrian offensive against Italy in the Tyrol had necessitated the transfer of troops to those regions. The eastern front had in consequence been weakened. The Russians had profited by immediately attacking the lines held by the Austro-Hungarian forces. In

⁶Handelsman, p. 30. It is difficult to decide whether public opinion influenced the government or whether the government fostered annexionist sentiment.

⁷Gratz and Schüller, p. 211.

⁸Burian, p. 76.

May General Brussilov had broken the Austrian lines in Volhynia and had almost entirely destroyed the army of the Archduke Joseph Ferdinand. At this juncture Rumania entered the war. A new line of defense was urgent. The thoughts of the statesmen of the Central Powers turned to Poland as a reservoir that might be drawn on to meet the need for men.

The first step towards the winning of the Poles was taken by the Vienna government when it pressed the military authorities to ameliorate their treatment of the inhabitants of the occupied area. This was followed by the granting of an important share in the local government to the Poles and by the joining of Chelm to the general-government of Lublin.⁹ A final sop to Polish opinion was the transformation of the Polish legions into a Polish corps.¹⁰ These concessions failed to satisfy the Poles, while Austrian defeats in eastern Galicia and at Luck put additional emphasis on the need for soldiers. At the same time, Tisza urged Burian to concede to the Germans.¹¹

Consequently, on July 27, Burian proposed the formation of a "sovereign state of Poland in the form of a kingdom."¹² Lithuania was to be joined to the new kingdom but the Polish provinces of the Central Powers were to remain as they were. Equal opportunities and privileges of the new kingdom were to be granted to Austria and Germany, although the Austro-Hungarian statesman urged that Poland's autonomy should be limited as little as possible. A Polish constitution was to be framed in consultation with the Poles. To elaborate the plan, a meeting of the Austro-German statesmen was held at Vienna on August 11 and 12.¹³ The German chancellor demanded that Poland be included in the German customs union. Burian promptly claimed the same advantages for his government. This led to a deadlock, and the meeting was adjourned without any agreement having been reached.¹⁴

On August 16, 1916, the statesmen of the Dual Monarchy in a general ministerial council discussed the economic implications of the proposed agreement.¹⁵ The consensus of opinion was that it would be less unfavorable for Austria-Hungary if the Poles

⁹J. Blociszewski, La restauration de la Pologne et la diplomatie Européenne (Paris, 1927), p. 14; Filasiewicz, No. 56, pp. 94-96.

¹⁰Ibid., No. 33, pp. 49-50.

¹¹Blociszewski, pp. 24-30.

¹²Handelsman, pp. 35-40.

¹³Burian, pp. 78-82; Bethmann Hollweg, p. 93.

¹⁴Auerbach, p. 390; Handelsman, pp. 35-36.

¹⁵Gratz and Schüller, p. 217.

were organized independently of the German customs union. It was decided that the prestige of Austria-Hungary in Poland should not be inferior to that of the German Empire. If its relative position were lowered, difficulty might arise for the Austrian government in Galicia. The incorporation of Poland in the German customs union, it was asserted, would be a severe handicap to Polish economic life. On the other hand, should an independent Polish customs area be formed, it would have to be grafted on the economic system of the two powers. Otherwise, Poland would enter into an economic alliance with Russia. The best way to avoid this eventuality was to grant preferential treatment to Poland. In view of the difficulties involved, the Austro-Hungarian statesmen decided to prolong the negotiations.

From August 29 to September 1 conferences were held between the economic experts of the two powers in Berlin. Dr. Helfferich, speaking for the Germans, argued that the economic dependence of Poland on the German Empire would be best for all concerned. Economic difficulties in Poland could be avoided only, he asserted, by attaching Poland to some other customs area. Poland, independent, would suffer economic decline. This would cause discontent in Poland and lead to economic reunion with Russia. Von Merey, the Austro-Hungarian representative, refused to admit that an independent Poland would not be able to survive economically. In support of his argument he cited the example of states which did exist and whose territory was less than that of Poland. Other arguments were presented, but the conference was unable to arrive at any agreement.

The military leaders were not immediately informed of the negotiations. Upon being advised of the failures at Vienna and Berlin, General Ludendorff charged Burian with faint-heartedness over domestic issues (i.e., fear of the reaction in Galicia) when the successful prosecution of the war was at stake.¹⁶ Burian, on the contrary, maintained that a decision concerning Poland should not be made on a purely military basis.¹⁷ It was with this background that another conference was called at Pless on October 18.¹⁸ Both military and civil officials of the two monarchies

¹⁶Karl Tschuppik, Ludendorff. Die Tragodie des Fachmanns (Vienna and Leipzig, 1931), pp. 115-27; Bethmann Hollweg, p. 93.

¹⁷Burian, p. 86.

¹⁸Handelsman, pp. 37-38; Auerbach, pp. 391-92; Bethmann Hollweg, p. 95; Ludendorff, pp. 315-18; Falkenhayn, pp. 276-77. Bethmann, Jagow, Beseler, Hindenburg and Ludendorff represented Germany. The representatives of Austria-Hungary were Merey, Burian and Conrad. A plan for the combining of the two occupied

were present. Controversy arose between the military and civil leaders in regard to the extent of the concessions which were to be granted the Poles. The military leaders, according to Burian, were interested only in obtaining soldiers and desired to avoid political issues. The statesmen, however, were finally able to convince them of the necessity of a political compromise and an agreement was ultimately reached.¹⁹

According to the plan adopted,²⁰ Germany and Austria-Hungary bound themselves to establish an independent kingdom of Poland with a hereditary ruler and a constitutional government. The right to rectify the frontier for military purposes by either ally was recognized. Suwalki was not to be included in the territory embraced by the kingdom, but a portion of Lithuania with a predominantly Polish population was to form part of the new Polish state. The eastern frontier of Poland was to be extended as far eastward as possible, providing peace could be secured with Russia. The internal administration was to be left to the Poles except during the necessary transitional period. As for its foreign policy, Poland was to be associated with the alliance of the two empires. All treaties concluded by Poland must be in accord with the agreements made by the Central Powers with each other and must be approved by them. Poland was to have her own army, but it was to be administered by a mixed military commission (Austrian and German officers) and not by the Poles themselves. Further negotiations were to decide the various problems arising from the economic relationships of the two powers with Poland. The training and high command of the army was to be uniform and assigned to Germany. The announcement of the proposed establishment was to be made as soon as possible. The actual constitution, however, was not to be promulgated until the close of the war. During the war Poland was to remain occupied by the Central Powers.

Unquestionably the two powers desired, because of the critical military situation, to bring about the formation of a Polish army allied with their own. According to the testimony of Bülow the plan was originated by Bethmann who was urged into such a policy by Privy Councillor Riezler and Dr. Hans Delbrück.²¹ The

areas under the sole control of Beseler was dropped when it was energetically opposed by Burian.

¹⁹Burian, pp. 82-86.

²⁰Ludendorff, Urkunden, pp. 296-300; Die Ursachen des deutschen Zusammenbruchs im Jahr 1918 (Berlin, 1926), VIII, 315.

²¹Bernard Fürst von Bülow, Deukwurdigkeiten (Berlin, 1931), III, 249. Cramon, p. 122, claims that Ludendorff was not responsible for the origin of the plan, for "Als Feldmarschall

latter believed that the breach of Belgium's neutrality might be "morally readjusted" if the Central Powers created an independent Poland. General von Beseler, the German governor-general for Poland, according to Bülow, was tricked by the Poles into believing that the mere proclamation of a kingdom would result in the creation of a large Polish volunteer army. On the other hand, Bülow charges Bethmann with the responsibility of encouraging the governor-general in the project. It seems that Ludendorff was in hearty accord with Bethmann,²² but that Hindenburg doubted the feasibility of obtaining Polish soldiers by such means.²³ Falkenhayn, in his account, claims that he was opposed to the plan, and that when he was informed in August of the visit of the German chancellor to Vienna for the purpose of finally settling the Polish problem, he protested and succeeded in postponing the execution of the plan.²⁴ Another reason, however, has been suggested for the delay. At this time the Central Powers were hoping for a separate peace with Russia, and they were anxious to avoid any act which would make negotiations with the latter more difficult. The failure of the Russian negotiations as well as the entry of Rumania led to a renewal of the insistence that the plan be put into execution.²⁵

On November 5, 1916, the two governors-general of Poland issued the proclamations for the formation of a Polish kingdom. It was to have a constitutional government with a hereditary ruler. Its boundaries were not defined and many features of the new government were equally vague. The governors expressed the hope that the future of Poland would be a happy one in association with the peoples of Germany and Austria. To obtain this aim most readily the Poles were invited to join the new Polish army and aid the Central Powers in bringing about a speedy and happy conclusion to the war.²⁶

Without consulting her ally, Austria on the same November

v. Hindenburg und er in die D.H.L. berufen wurden, waren die Würfel über die Frage selbst grundsässig längst gefallen: da er einen Zuwachs an Kräften durch polnische Truppen, die natürlich nicht aus der Erde gestampft werden konnten, freudig begrüßte, hat er seinen Einfluss dahin geltend gemacht, mit der Erklärung nicht zu zögern, weil bis zur Verwendungsmöglichkeit dieses Kräftezuwachses eben noch geraume Zeit vergehen müsste."

²²Ludendorff, p. 316.

²³Hindenburg, p. 201.

²⁴Falkenhayn, p. 277.

²⁵Handelsman, p. 35.

²⁶Filasiewicz, No. 38, pp. 57-58.

5 granted a greater degree of self-government to the Poles of Galicia. This was done in order to prevent the Poles from asking for the reunion of that province with the new kingdom. The Polish leaders felt deceived, as Austria's action ruined their hope of creating a united Polish state.²⁷

2. The Polish Response to the
Proclamations of November 5, 1916, and the Consequent
Modification of the Polish Policy of the Central
Powers (November 5, 1916--March 15, 1917)

The immediate aim of the Central Powers in issuing the proclamations of November 5 was the creation of a Polish army which might be utilized by them in the war. On November 9, 1916, the inhabitants of Poland were invited to enroll themselves in the military service.²⁸ Three days later enlistment bureaus were established for the infantry and cavalry divisions. The rights and privileges of German soldiers were to be given these volunteers. They were to be dressed in Polish national uniforms and were to use the Polish flag, the white eagle on a red field.²⁹ General von Beseler soon recognized that the proclamations had failed in their purpose. There was practically no response. In order to save the situation, on November 12 he went one step farther, and on his own initiative announced the creation of a provisional council of state and a diet. While this did not increase the probability of raising contingents from Poland, it made the Polish government an accomplished fact. The Central Powers were henceforth bound to the continuation of a policy which had been proclaimed without any intention of sincerity.³⁰

The Poles had sensed this lack of frankness in the German attitude from the beginning of the war. To be sure the Russian Polish areas under the control of the Central Powers had already been largely stripped of their available man power by the czarist government, but the failure of the Germans and their Austro-Hungarian ally to obtain soldiers was more fully attributable to their inability to convince the Poles that their policy was a whole-hearted attempt to further Polish interests. Months before the issuance of the proclamations of November 5, the Poles, by means of their political clubs, had begun to attack the Central

²⁷Ibid., No. 86, pp. 164-65. They were correct in their estimate as subsequent events proved.

²⁸Ibid., No. 44, pp. 66-67; No. 117, pp. 219-23.

²⁹Ibid., No. 45, pp. 70-71.

³⁰Handelsman, pp. 39-40; Bethmann-Hollweg, II, 87.

Powers wherever freedom of expression was given them.

As early as March 10, 1915, Maryan Seyda, president of the Polish parliamentary club, had demanded in the Reichtag that the laws of exception against the Poles should be repealed. Dr. Clemens von Delbruck, German secretary of state for the interior, denied the existence of any laws which emphasized special rights for Germans to the detriment of individuals of Polish extraction.³¹ Other Germans were more willing to admit the truth of the Polish contention.³² In the discussion which followed, the German attitude was that the future of Germany and of the German people was the primary consideration with respect to Poland. The Poles, on the contrary, urged that the greatest good for all concerned would be realized if the laws of exception and the censorship of the press would be repealed at once rather than at the close of the war.³³ In order to mollify the Polish opposition the German chancellor spoke to the Reichtag on October 19. Russia, the German statesman declared, was responsible for the devastation of Poland. Germany had delivered the Poles from "the Russian yoke." He hoped, in consequence, that the former enmity of the Poles and Germans would be forgotten, and that a new spirit of cooperation would arise in which Poles and Germans working together would realize a national life for Poland. In a speech delivered the next day, Seyda interpreted the chancellor to mean that the government acknowledged the right of the Poles to develop their national life. The chancellor, he declared, recognized that Polish cultural development was significant, and that the welfare of the Germans was not contradictory to that of the Poles. The Prussian conservatives, on the other hand, interpreted the chancellor's speech to mean that Poland would not be given the right of a free, autonomous development, but that the Polish freedom would come only under German tutelage.³⁴

It had been the policy of the Supreme National Committee of Cracow, since the beginning of the war, to prevent a definitive establishment of the Polish boundaries in order that thereby they might safeguard the principle of national unity. The early

³¹Verhandlungen des Reichstags, XIII Legislaturperiode, II Session, CCCVI, p. 48.

³²Ibid., p. 93.

³³Ibid., pp. 113b, 116a.

³⁴Ibid., p. 239. On the following Thursday, August 26, Polish members presented a resolution providing for the election of a commission of twenty-one members to handle all proposals concerning housing conditions. The suggestion was approved without dissent.

success of the Austro-German army against the Russians had given the committee courage. Representative Poles from the Russian area were added to the committee, which thenceforth insisted that Polish questions should be decided by the cabinet of Vienna only in consultation with them. The committee's contention was that a victorious Austria-Hungary ought not to increase its territory, but that it was to the interest of the Danubian monarchy to make possible the association of a united Poland with Austria. During the latter part of the year 1914 the committee succeeded in winning the confidence of the Vienna government. The military authorities then permitted it to spread its propaganda to that portion of Russian Poland occupied by the army of the Dual Monarchy. The committee's program, declared Count Hoyos in the name of the Vienna government, should have as its essential aim the reunion "of Polish territories that are under Russian domination with Galicia within the body of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy." Both Poles and Austrians were promptly censured by the German government on account of this suggestion.³⁵

When the Cracow committee carried its propaganda into Congress Poland, it found an atmosphere much less Russophil than it had been at the beginning of the war. This condition was a result of the treatment given the people by the Russian army on its retreat from the area, for the soldiers had pillaged and burned the abandoned villages. The Russian authorities had closed the schools in Lemburg and its environs and had violated the feelings of the people by the forcible conversion of the Uniates to the Greek orthodox faith and by the deportation of Mgr. Szeptycki, the metropolitan of Lemburg, to Russia. Even the Czar Nicholas had irritated Polish feeling by proclaiming, during a visit to Galicia, that Eastern Galicia was a country thoroughly Russian. Thus the earlier enthusiasm for Russia had been changed, and the ranks of the partisans of complete independence were enlarged.

In November, 1914, a committee similar to the Supreme National Committee of Cracow had been organized at Warsaw. This committee, known as the National Committee, was composed of National Democrats, some of the conservatives, and some of the progressives of Congress Poland. The committee's aim was the reunion of all Polish territory in the course of the war. It did not specify how this was to be accomplished. On the Russian retreat, it established itself in Leningrad. Warsaw, bereft of leaders, became the capital of the armies of William II and in the minds of many of its inhabitants had only changed masters. As a result of the apathy of the capital, the Supreme National Committee of

³⁵Blociszewski, p. 15.

Cracow became the sole leader of public opinion in the several Polish areas. It organized parties and spread its propaganda in favor of an Austro-Polish union.³⁶

The activity of this committee was in a large measure a result of its belief that the aid of Austria was indispensable for the winning of Polish liberty. Unfortunately, the Austro-Hungarian general staff would not permit the establishment of a Polish civil authority in association with the military government. Neither Burian nor Stürgkh had sufficient strength to carry through any policy in opposition to the military officials, while Tisza opposed any favor to the Poles for fear of endangering the dual principle. At the same time, the lack of discipline in the Austrian army led to abuses by the forces occupying Poland. When the Supreme National Committee ventured to petition Burian and explain that the conditions caused by the army hindered its propaganda, he could only counsel patience.³⁷ The net result of Austrian policy with respect to the committee was the eventual alienation of that group from its support of the Austrian government.

In the meantime, a group of "activists" led by Dr. Brudzinski had been asked by General von Beseler, the governor-general of Warsaw, to assume the responsibility of organizing the new government. This request gave Dr. Brudzinski and his associates an opportunity to present further demands to the occupying authorities. Regretting their inability to represent the whole Polish nation, they requested the nomination of a regent with full sovereign powers and the development of an administration composed only of Poles. Eventually, they said, they hoped for a king, the fixation of frontiers, and the conclusion of peace.³⁸ Thus, before the actual proclamation of the kingdom, the Poles charged with the inauguration of the government asked for further concessions.

The reply of the Polish parties to the call for volunteers to aid the Central Powers was equally outspoken. The radical parties within the Supreme National Committee declared that "the army, the most pure incarnation of the will of the people ought to be formed only by a Polish government, which alone should have the right to dispose of Polish blood." A proclamation by the "activist" parties on November 10 urged the Polish youth to enlist only under Polish officers in a Polish army responsible to a Polish government.

³⁶Handelsman, pp. 140-41.

³⁷Filasiewicz, No. 37, pp. 56-57.

³⁸Auerbach, pp. 392-93; Burian, pp. 86-87; Filasiewicz, No. 35, pp. 53-54; No. 36, pp. 54-55.

This opposition led General von Beseler to a second step in the development of the Polish kingdom. Over his signature a decree was issued promising to establish a provisional council of state and a diet for the new government.³⁹ The general-government of Warsaw was to provide seventy deputies for the proposed diet, but no reference was made to representation from the Austrian area. The qualifications of deputies were based on the ownership of property and residence in the kingdom of Poland. They were to be males thirty years of age who possessed civil rights and who knew the Polish language. Of the proposed council of state, five members including the president were to be named by the governor-general of Warsaw. The other members were to be chosen by the diet and were to have the qualifications of members of that body. The duties of the provisional council of state included deliberation concerning laws submitted to it by the governor-general, the initiation of laws, and the promulgation of laws enacted by the diet. Its work and the work of the diet required the approval of the German government. The governor-general was empowered to convoke or adjourn either body at his discretion. The most important duty of the diet was to be that of raising funds for the general-government, but these funds could be appropriated by it only with the consent of the authorities of the occupying nations. The language to be used in both bodies was Polish, the German government reserving the right to use German in its dealings with the Poles.

A later decree issued on December 6, 1916, by governors Von Beseler and Kuk (of the Austrian administration) modified and defined the plan of November 12. The membership of the provisional council of state was to be limited to twenty-five, fifteen of whom were to come from the German area, and ten from the Austrian zone of occupation. Qualified by their "aspirations and interest in the nation," the members of the council were to be appointed by the governments of Germany and Austria and not elected as previously announced. Each of the general-governments was to be represented on the council by a commissioner and two assistants. Upon being convoked by the commissioners, the council was empowered to choose a president and vice-president. The president was to carry the title of marshal of the crown and to have the power to call later sessions of the council. The council was also to choose an executive committee which the Germans probably desired to become the active agency of government in the new Polish state.

³⁹Filasiewicz, No. 46, pp. 72-77; Handelsman, p. 40.

This was issued without consulting either government of the Central Powers.

This committee was "to collaborate in the creation of the eventual organization of Poland." Specifically they were "to aid in the formation of an army and in the reparation of the damages of war."⁴⁰

If the statesmen of the Central Powers imagined that the formation of the Provisional Council of State would satisfy Polish aspirations, they were doomed to disillusionment. The Poles quickly recognized the new establishment for the half measure which it was. A new outburst of criticism by the Poles of the government's policy occurred. Supported in principle by the "activists" it was openly condemned by the "passivists." But even the former were unsatisfied. "We declare," said the leading "activists" on December 7 in a memorandum to the German representative, Lerchenfeld-Köfering, "that since the Council of State is to be a provisional government, it should be an institution having full independence of initiative and decision in internal polity." Moreover, they demanded that if they as a group should associate themselves with the administration, the Polish army should be directly under the control of the diet (not yet formed), and that they should be able to take an active part in the decisions of the new government. It was only the "neutralists" who were willing to recognize the Provisional Council of State as a government. All other parties refused their cooperation.⁴¹

During the month of December, 1916, General von Beseler attempted to overcome the objections of the Poles and to persuade them to support the toy government which he had established. The first duty of a modern state, he declared, was to form an army. Germans were excellent teachers.⁴² The general smiled at the dream of a Polish state which would extend from the Baltic to the Black sea and declared that it was a choice of union with the powers of the Entente or with the Central Powers. It was better, he believed, for the Poles to combine with the Central Powers. With the Germans the Poles had a community of interest, and because the Germans had made sacrifices for Polish liberty, Germany had full right to ask for Polish cooperation.⁴³ The German policy, however, was more clearly expressed in a proclamation of the governor-general issued on December 30. The Poles, he declared, had received a mistaken notion of German policy. The reconstitution of the Polish state did not mean that Poland would be freed

⁴⁰Filasiewicz, No. 56, pp. 94-96.

⁴¹Ibid., p. 108.

⁴²Excellent but also irritating teachers; cf. Batthyany, p. 134.

⁴³Filasiewicz, No. 62, pp. 109-17.

from all of the obligations of the war. The war was being fought for Poland as well as for Germany. He begged the Poles to be patriotic in the German cause, but stated that any disobedience to the German rule would be severely punished. The mailed fist of the German government was scarcely concealed by the German policy.

The German government and its policy were criticised in both the Prussian diet and the German Reichstag.⁴⁴ On November 9 Bethmann frankly admitted that the chief aim of the policy was to fill the gaps in the German regiments and to conserve German soldiers. In the Prussian diet a resolution was presented on November 20 urging Germany to make certain beforehand of a proper military and economic position in the new Polish kingdom. Supported by the Prussian minister for interior, Loebell, the German government's policy was attacked by the Polish deputy, Styczynski, who declared that the Austro-German manifesto recognized the international importance of Poland and admitted the right of the Poles to form a state.

In Austria-Hungary criticism was likewise launched against the policy of the authorities of occupation. In response to a speech by Count Batthyany, who proposed a united and autonomous Poland, Tisza urged the danger to the government should doubt arise in Poland with respect to the methods and seriousness of the government's policy. Another source of irritation for the Austrian Poles at this time was the question of Galicia and its relationship with the new Polish government. As we have seen, the Austrian authorities granted Galicia local autonomy on November 5. Bilinski became the prime mover in the committee which was appointed by the Polish parliamentary club to prepare a new constitution. Finished in March, 1917, it was submitted by him to the government of the Dual Monarchy. The Russian revolution which occurred in the same month, however, completely altered the situation from the point of view of the Central Powers so that no further steps to extend autonomy in Galicia were taken.

Meanwhile, on December 6, 1916, the occupying authorities had announced the formation of the Provisional Council of State. On January 14, 1917, its work was duly inaugurated in the royal chateau at Warsaw, and on the following day it held its first official meeting. Venecslas Niemojowski was elected marshal of the crown and Arthur Sliwinski was named secretary. Three days later the Provisional Council of State issued its first manifesto to the Polish people, a document obviously colored by German in-

⁴⁴Ibid., No. 64, p. 119; No. 43, p. 65; No. 54, p. 91; No. 53, pp. 85-90; Batthyany, p. 135; Filasiewicz, No. 61, pp. 61-63.

fluence. Its organization was completed on January 30 when departments of finance, political affairs, interior, social economy, labor, justice, public instruction and cults, and war were formed. The heads of these eight departments were to compose the executive committee of the council. A constitutional committee was also appointed. It was composed of thirty members, twelve of whom were members of the council. On February 1, department heads were chosen, Pilsudski being made chairman of a commission to consider the development of the army.⁴⁵

Despite the opposition of the Poles, the Central Powers had apparently succeeded in winning sufficient support to form a new government and put it into operation. But unknown to the Polish leaders the Central Powers had once more renewed their negotiations with regard to the Polish question. One reason for the reopening of the problem was the outspoken criticism of the German-Austrian policy by the Poles. The immediate cause, however, was the changing personnel in the government of the Dual Monarchy. Late in the autumn of 1916 Dr. Friedrich Adler assassinated Count Stürgkh, the Austrian premier. One of the first duties of the new minister, Dr. von Koerber, was to issue the proclamation of November 5. This the new premier agreed to do because of the physical condition of the emperor, although it seems to have been contrary to his own judgment in the matter.⁴⁶ The death of Francis Joseph a fortnight later led to the appointment of Count Ottokar Czernin as the Austrian foreign minister. Shortly afterwards negotiations were opened between Germany and Austria.

Germany suggested that she had a far superior right to Poland and that the simplest solution of the problem would be the evacuation by Austria-Hungary of its zone of occupation. When Czernin refused to consider the German suggestion, the German statesmen asked for the cession of vast portions of Polish territory in the form of frontier adjustments, the remainder to be awarded either to Austria-Hungary or to an independent Poland. This German offer was discussed in a joint ministerial council of the Dual Monarchy in January, 1917.⁴⁷ Czernin held that the war should not end in a peace dictated by the Central Powers, but

⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 121-29.

⁴⁶Joseph Redlich, Emperor Francis Joseph of Austria (New York, 1929), pp. 531-33.

⁴⁷Count Ottokar Czernin, In the World War (New York and London, 1920), pp. 222, 226-29; Gratz and Schüller, p. 226; Count Ottokar Czernin, Erinnerungen an Graf Stefan Tisza (Budapest, 1925), pp. 55-58; Handelsman, pp. 40-42.

that, on the conclusion of peace, territorial settlements should be made only in cooperation with the Entente. He believed that if Poland were given the right of self-determination she would of her own accord declare for union with Austria. Tisza once more opposed this suggestion and proposed that Poland should be given to Germany in exchange for economic and financial compensation. Here the question rested until the Russian collapse changed the whole situation.

3. The Background of the Constitution of September 12, 1917

The first phase of the Russian revolution had begun on March 8, 1917, and was completed March 15 by the abdication of the czar. On the following day a provisional administration was established and on March 17 Miliukov, the minister of foreign affairs, announced that the new Russian government would respect the international engagements assumed by the czarist regime.⁴⁸ On March 28 a Russian commission was established to settle Polish affairs.⁴⁹ At this juncture the peace movements in Germany as well as Austria led to a further discussion of the Polish question between the Central Powers.

A conference, called by the kaiser in cooperation with the Emperor Charles, was held on April 3 at Hombourg. Besides the two emperors, Czernin, Bethmann, Arz, Hindenburg, and Ludendorff were present. A preliminary agreement had been made on March 27 by Bethmann and Czernin providing for the minimum conditions of peace (based on the status quo ante) and for a more favorable settlement should the war have a more fortunate outcome.⁵⁰ The details of this agreement were known only to the

⁴⁸Filasiewicz, p. 143.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 145.

⁵⁰Bethmann-Hollweg, p. 90. Filasiewicz, No. 92, gives additional material in the form of a telephoned dispatch from the German chancellor to General von Beseler. This dispatch reveals that a meeting had been held at Hombourg (the exact date is not given) by certain Austrian representatives and William II on account of news of discontent in Poland which had reached the Emperor Charles. The Austrian representatives, Berchtold and Andrian, insisted that the Poles should be satisfied immediately by the nomination of a regent. They were also willing to give the Poles far-reaching concessions along other lines. The kaiser thought that the Poles were trying to exaggerate the situation. The evidence is clear that Ludendorff was opposed to the appoint-

statesmen, and the conference, in consequence, had as a background an understanding of which the military leaders were not aware.⁵¹

The first question discussed was that of peace. Ludendorff declared that the Entente was prepared to make a tremendous effort and that conditions, on that account, were unfavorable for peace. Czernin, in order to persuade the Germans to make peace, offered to give Galicia to Poland if Germany would give Alsace and Lorraine to France. Germany would then be permitted to decide the future of Poland.⁵² Ludendorff, on the contrary, believed that the surrender of German territory to France would be an open confession of weakness.⁵³

While no general agreement was reached, the trend of the conference indicates the development of a doubt as to the wisdom of extending German control over Poland. Ludendorff and his associates of the German High Command continued to insist that Germany should maintain its authority over Poland, but the politicians were beginning to feel that Austria-Hungary with her already mixed nationality could handle the problem with less difficulty than Germany.

In May another conference was held at Kreuznach. Here the agreement was made that if Poland were given to Germany, Austria-Hungary should have special interests in Rumania.⁵⁴ Shortly afterward, Czernin began once more actively to support the Austro-Polish solution. He desired, he said, to enhance the prestige of the Emperor Charles by combining Poland with Austria under the personal rule of the Habsburg monarch. Poland would be given Galicia. Germany would be granted the necessary rectifications of the Prussian-Polish boundary with a strengthening of the German-Austrian alliance through political, economic, and military

ment of a regent. Berchtold and Andrian were empowered to accept the Archduke Charles Stephan as king of Poland if the kaiser was favorable to his appointment. Bethmann said in his dispatch that he hoped the whole matter would be settled by the two emperors. He stated that he had suggested that the Poles be kept occupied with practical problems. He thought, however, it was not wise to promise more concessions to the Poles. Yet, if General von Beseler thought it would be wise to grant a regent and a ministry it might be done. He suggested the Archbishop of Warsaw as regent.

⁵¹Ludendorff, II, 46-47.

⁵²Cramon, p. 124.

⁵³Ludendorff, II, 47.

⁵⁴Cramon, p. 124.

agreements. The consent of the kaiser was obtained, but the German military leaders were not inclined to agree. To prevent a consummation of the plan, they set their price so high that all negotiations were postponed until after the Italian offensive.⁵⁵

A change in the personnel of the governments of the Central Powers made possible a renewal of the negotiations along the line of the Austro-Polish solution in the autumn of 1917.⁵⁶ Herr von Kühlmann, the new German foreign minister, had always favored this plan. Tisza had resigned his post in the Hungarian government. The negotiations took place during the first six days of September. Kühlmann, in exchange for his support of the plan, demanded that the alliance between Germany and Austria-Hungary should be reinforced with military conventions, that rectifications of the German frontier should be made at Poland's expense, and that Germany's economic and financial interests in Poland should be guaranteed. Czernin was inclined to accept this proposal, but requested that the territory annexed by Germany should be reduced to the minimum, and that Poland should be compensated for her losses in this respect by additions to her eastern frontier. The Austrian minister was willing to have Poland bound to the Central Powers by means of a military alliance and suggested that the two high commands should come to an understanding in this matter. Finally, he requested that the prerogative of the Polish king should not be limited (in order that he might be able to carry out his plan of a personal union under the Habsburg sovereign). These negotiations led to the decision to promulgate a new Polish constitutional decree on September 12.

The Poles had very little knowledge of the negotiations between Germany and Austria-Hungary. It is true that some of the leading politicians had been consulted concerning their attitude toward a personal union of Poland with the Dual Monarchy, and that propaganda had been fostered by each of the military governments in Poland. The Germans, the Austrian statesmen believed, were deliberately encouraging agitation in favor of what was commonly known as the "candidate solution." This was a plan which would set some prince other than the Austrian emperor on the Polish throne. As a counter-move, the Austrian emperor in a speech on May 5 once more promised autonomy to the Poles. Generally speaking, however, the Poles were unaware of the proposals which

⁵⁵ Ibid., pp. 124-25; Ludendorff, pp. 47-48, 151-52; Generaloberst Arz, Zur Geschichte des grossen Krieges 1914-1918 (Vienna, Leipzig, Munich, 1924), pp. 231-34.

⁵⁶ Gratz and Schüller, pp. 228-29; Filasiewicz, No. 123, pp. 230-32.

the Central Powers were making to each other, and, in consequence, the trend of development in Poland was uninfluenced by their diplomacy.⁵⁷

Throughout the spring and summer of 1917 the Provisional Council of State complained repeatedly that its activities were curtailed by the occupation authorities. Particularly was this true with regard to its control over the Polish army.⁵⁸ Without considering the military commission established by the Provisional Council on January 17, the Central Powers had entrusted the organization of the Polish army to an Abteilung für polnische Wehrmacht under the governor-general of Warsaw. All of the important offices in the service were given to Germans. The Polish legionnaires were assigned without restriction only one task, namely, recruiting. Every effort of the military commission to gain greater control was without result. Finally, in a meeting of the Provisional Council on March 16, Pilsudski openly criticised the occupying powers. "In order to be a soldier," he declared, "a soldier has need of a legal government; in order to be a government, a government has need of a legal soldier. We already possess that soldier, but all other efforts have been without result." Six days later a crisis occurred in the Provisional Council when the Austrian government announced the incorporation of the Polish auxiliary corps in the army of the Polish kingdom. The Poles had requested that this action should be taken, but they were disappointed when the legions were placed under the direct control of General von Beseler instead of their own military commission. As a result, on the following day, the Provisional Council threatened to resign unless the Polish army were placed under the control of the military commission. Its demands were met in part by the incorporation of the legions in a Polish army.⁵⁹ The Provisional Council did not resign, for it had discovered a weapon which could be used against the Central Powers.

On April 6, 1917, the council appealed to the occupation authorities for a revision of the relationship existing between the Central Powers and the council. In this appeal it once more requested the control of the Polish army, the control of the administration of justice and public instruction, and, in addition, the control of the food administration in the zone of occupation. The council maintained that as a legally organized state the Polish government should be "recognized as a distinct object of international law and empowered to receive and send delegations in

⁵⁷Handelsman, p. 42; Filasiewicz, No. 90, p. 172.

⁵⁸Filasiewicz, p. 144.

⁵⁹Ibid., Nos. 82, 83, 84, 86, pp. 160-64.

their relationship with the allied and neutral powers and to call a regent."⁶⁰ Four days later the Emperor Charles gave it control of the army. His compliance resulted from the desire of the Central Powers to obtain Polish soldiers by means of conscription. A law for that purpose had been prepared by the Provisional Council of State, but it had not been promulgated by the council because of its lack of control over the army.⁶¹

Having partly succeeded in securing the concessions requested by it on April 6, the Provisional Council of State on May 1 presented a further statement of the Poles in favor of self-government. The decree of November 5, 1916 had designated the proposed government as a kingdom. This had led the Poles to believe that eventually a king would be given them. In accordance with this idea the Provisional Council on April 6 had requested that a regent be given them until such a time when a king would be selected. This suggestion was reiterated and defined in the proposals of May 1.⁶² Before formulating a reply, the governor-general attempted to recruit soldiers without Polish aid, but he soon discovered that all of his efforts were nullified by the Polish attitude. His failure to obtain Polish soldiers convinced the Central Powers that a favorable reply should be given to the petition of the Provisional Council. Accordingly, the powers of the council were enlarged to include the administration of the schools, the courts, and social welfare. Still unsatisfied and hoping to obtain greater concessions, the council on May 17 again announced its dissolution. Once more it was able to obtain a favorable response.⁶³

The Central Powers were prepared, declared their representatives at Warsaw and Lublin (Lerchenfeld-Köfering and Konopka), to appoint a regent when conditions were ripe for such action. The Provisional Council was authorized to frame immediately a new constitution for Poland. This constitution was to provide a plan for the local government of Poland, particularly with regard to the administration of justice, instruction and cults, arts and sciences, social economy, commerce and industry. After some deliberation, the Provisional Council on June 12 decided to accept the offer of the Central Powers and appointed a commission to prepare a plan for the organization of the Polish government.⁶⁴

During the month of May, spirited opposition had arisen

⁶⁰Ibid., pp. 158-59.

⁶¹Błociszewski, pp. 66-79.

⁶²Filasiewicz, p. 171.

⁶³Ibid., No. 98, pp. 185-86.

⁶⁴Ibid., p. 192.

in the Polish army to German control. Finally, on June 2 the difficulty with the army came to a climax when Pilsudski and three colleagues retired from the military commission, giving as a reason for their resignation the impossibility of obtaining the organization of a national Polish army. On June 28 General von Beseler promised better conditions, but he made no fundamental changes.⁶⁵ One of the problems that had arisen was the requirement of a military oath from the Polish soldiers. When this was demanded the Poles said that it was in support of Beseler and not of the Polish government. The majority of the soldiers, on the suggestion of Pilsudski, refused to swear the oath and were interned. Finally, on the morning of July 22 Pilsudski and his associate Sosnkowski were arrested. The "independentists" forthwith resigned from the Provisional Council. Their loss made the Polish government only partly representative of the Polish people.

The events of the month of August brought additional discouragement to the council. The imprisonment of Pilsudski and his fellow Poles could not be satisfactorily explained by the German government. It was believed wise to transfer Polish soldiers to the south-east front.⁶⁶ Eventually on August 25 the Provisional Council resigned,⁶⁷ appointing in its stead a temporary commission of three members.⁶⁸

The military authorities of the Central Powers accepted its resignation but promised that the organization of the Polish government would not be delayed and that the development of Poland should continue until Poland found herself within the "circle of the autonomous states of Europe."⁶⁹ Events outside as well as within their sphere of control had forced the Germans to repair the faults committed and to seek a modus vivendi with the Poles. The submarine campaign had failed, and with its failure had vanished the hope of starving England into submission. The preparations of the United States, which had entered the war and was at that time preparing to take a vigorous part in its prosecution, made greater efforts necessary. Within Germany the Erzberger disclosures of July 6, revealing the despair of the Vienna government, had shaken the morale of the people, while signs of war-weariness were becoming visible on every side. Therefore, to satisfy the Poles and to win Polish aid if possible, the Central Powers decided to give the Poles an actual share in the adminis-

⁶⁵ Ibid., pp. 201-2.

⁶⁶ Ibid., pp. 218-19.

⁶⁷ Ibid., No. 111, pp. 208-9; No. 115, pp. 216-17.

⁶⁸ Ibid., pp. 218-19.

⁶⁹ Ibid., No. 118.

tration of Poland. They aimed, however, to develop the administration in such a manner that on the conclusion of peace, the actual control could be reassumed by the Central Powers.⁷⁰

⁷⁰Handelsman, p. 43; Lutz, I, 417-20.

CHAPTER III

THE ATTEMPT OF THE CENTRAL POWERS TO FORMULATE A POLISH POLICY AFTER THE CONQUEST OF RUSSIAN POLAND: THE GOVERNMENT OF THE COUNCIL OF REGENCY

1. The Establishment of the Government of the Council of Regency and the Reconsideration of the Austro-Polish Solution

In keeping with the promise that had been given the Poles by the Central Powers, the Polish courts were placed under the administration of the department of justice of the defunct Provisional Council on September 1, 1917.¹ Eleven days later the occupation authorities issued the constitutional decree for the establishment of new Polish government, the second to be established by them during the course of the war.² Sovereign power in the new state was to be exercised by a king or a Council of Regency, but the position of the Central Powers with respect to the international relations of Poland was to be preserved. The Council of Regency was to consist of three members appointed by the sovereigns of Germany and Austria-Hungary. All decrees of the council were to be countersigned by a responsible minister-president, who was to be selected from the cabinet, which was to be more fully established than it had been under the Provisional Council of State. The legislative power of the new government was to be vested in the Council of Regency and a Council of State. All laws, however, were to be submitted to the occupying powers for approval. Moreover, the courts and the more important administrative agencies were to be controlled by the Poles only in a limited degree; the governor was to retain appellate jurisdiction on all questions of interest to the occupying powers.

Three months were necessary for the elaboration of the

¹Filasiewicz, p. 226.

²Ibid., No. 123, pp. 230-32; No. 124, pp. 232-34. An explanatory edict issued conjointly but dated three days later declared that the only limitations on the Council of Regency were "international law and the interests of the occupying powers."

plan and the conveyance of the functions of government to the Poles. The administration of Polish schools was transferred to the temporary executive commission of the Provisional Council of State on October 1,³ but the transmission of other functions was delayed, in some cases indefinitely.⁴ Two weeks later the Council of Regency was appointed.⁵ The persons named, Mgr. Alexander Kakowski, metropolitan archbishop of Warsaw, Prince Zdzislaw Lubomirski, mayor of Warsaw, and Josephy Ostrowski, a large land owner in Maluszyn, were formally installed on October 27 by Governors von Beseler and Szeptycki.⁶ The next day the council announced the selection of Count Adam Tarnowski as the first premier. Although his candidature had been proposed by a large number of the Polish parties, the German government refused to ratify his nomination.⁷ Instead, on November 21 General von Beseler informed the Regency that Jean Kucharzewski, secretary of the Council of Regency, met with the approval of the Central Powers. Five days later Kucharzewski was appointed president of the Polish ministry by the Council of Regency.

Even before his appointment to office, the Polish premier had announced his policy.⁸ In the first place, he promised to establish a Polish administration without delay on the basis of the proclamations of November 5, 1916, and September 12, 1917.

³Ibid., No. 128, pp. 245-46. On September 27 the University of Warsaw and the Warsaw Polytechnic School had been given to the Department of Public Instruction and Cults, which had been established by the Provisional Council of State. On September 30 the German curator of schools resigned. On the other hand the Germans attempted to gain more complete control of the Evangelical Church. Cf. ibid., No. 140, p. 262.

⁴See pp. 74-83.

⁵Ibid., Nos. 131-32, pp. 251-52; Lutz, I, No. 279, pp. 761-62.

⁶Filasiewicz, Nos. 141-43, pp. 263-68.

⁷Ibid., No. 144, pp. 270-72. The candidature of Tarnowski was supported by the National Party, League for the Polish State, Center Party, Polish Democratic Party, Populist Federation, Political Activists and National Workers.

⁸Ibid. The cabinet consisted of the following men: Jean Stecki, interior; Stanislas Bukowiecki, Justice; Jean-Kantz Steczkowski, finance; Antoine Ponikowski, public instruction and cults; Stefan Przanowski, recruiting; Joseph Mikulowski-Pomorski, agriculture and crown lands; Jean Zagleniczny, commerce and industry; Stanislas Staniszewski, social protection and defense of workers.

Secondly, he proposed the formation of a national Polish army, the nucleus of which would be the legions. Thirdly, he intended, he said, to form an "activist" cabinet as homogeneous as possible in politics. And finally, he promised to convoke a Council of State so constituted as to make possible collaboration with the occupying authorities. It was evident that the Central Powers expected to control Poland by choosing the leadership of the Polish government.

On December 7 the regency confirmed the new cabinet. Its membership consisted largely of professional men who were "ultra-activists." Departments of interior, justice, finance, public instruction and cults, recruiting, agriculture, commerce and industry, social protection, and defense of workers were established. All were newly created except the departments of instruction and justice which were taken over without change from the previous administration. There was no department of foreign affairs or of national defense.⁹ The occupying powers regarded the creation of departments of finance and commerce as notable concessions to the Poles.

In spite of the auspicious beginnings of the new government, it soon faced the outspoken opposition of the Polish parties. Within a week of the establishment of the Council of Regency as the government of Poland the majority of "activists" became critics of the Kucharzewski administration. On the day of Kucharzewski's assumption of office he declared to representatives of the Political Club of Parties that the formation of an army was indispensable for the preservation of Poland from the influences of the Russian revolution. In particular he feared the Bolshevik propaganda, which with the consent of the military authorities was being spread in all sections of the occupied territory, and the success of which would lead to the failure of the Polish national movement.¹⁰ In their reply the Polish representatives, alarmed that a Polish army under German command was being created, declared that his program was contrary to the best interests of Poland and that they would oppose it. They said that his repeated announcement that a Council of State would be formed remained unfulfilled.¹¹ This made the new government an object of criticism by all parties. A typical example of such criticism

⁹ An under-secretary of state for foreign affairs under the chief of the old political department, Count Albert Rostworowski, demeura en projet.

¹⁰ Filasiewicz, p. 272.

¹¹ Ibid., No. 179, pp. 342-46. Months passed before the Council was elected. See p. 85.

is the resolution of the congress of the Party for National Independence. A Polish state, the Party declared, could be built only by Polish hands; Poland must have a national diet; and a Polish army should be only under Polish control and led only by Pilsudski. The result of this agitation was twofold. On the one hand, the new Polish government became more pressing in its demands on the Central Powers for fear of losing Polish sympathy and support, and, on the other, it created an attitude of suspicion and caution on the part of the military governments, which made their treatment of the Poles even more niggardly than they had originally planned.

The appointment of the Council of Regency led to a re-opening of the negotiations between the Central Powers with regard to the ultimate disposition of Poland. The Kreuznach conference of May, 1917, had been followed by an offer of the Austrian government to grant Germany compensation (frontier rectifications and political, economic and military agreements) if Germany would permit the incorporation of Poland in the Dual Monarchy. As we have seen, the military authorities had stalemated the negotiations by demanding too much from Austrians. With the establishment of the Council of Regency as the new government in Poland, the Austro-Polish plan seemed to be the logical solution of the problem. Sometime during the autumn of 1917 Count Hertling had won the Kaiser to the Austro-Polish plan.¹² Czernin had likewise succeeded in winning the Austrian emperor to the same point of view.

The Emperor Charles, however, was afraid of a solution of Polish question without the consent of the Entente Powers. He saw only a bare possibility of victory by the Central Powers and concluded that they should not decide the Polish question by themselves, as such an agreement would merely be another obstacle in the way of peace.¹³ Further opposition arose within the Dual Monarchy, for Tisza once more refused to consent to trialism.¹⁴ Tisza insisted that, if Poland were incorporated with Austria, Hungary should have as much voice in the Delegations as Poland and Austria combined. The Austrian leaders considered this an impossibility.¹⁵ They insisted that the monarchy was a personal

¹²The kaiser asked that in return a closer union should be arranged between the Central Powers.

¹³Gratz and Schüller, p. 230.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Gratz and Schüller, pp. 232-33. Various plans were suggested. One opinion was that in the Delegations, if they were retained, decision must be made in a mixed session by a three-

union which should involve only the person of the sovereign, and that other matters, such as the order and rights of succession, foreign affairs, customs and currency, should be solved by agreement. The Austrian statesmen concurred with the Hungarian leaders in the opinion that the matter of external defense was of general concern, but opinions differed as to the actual organization of the military establishment. Some leaders urged that three armies should be created, with a common higher staff detached from the smaller general staffs.

With this background, negotiations continued between Germany and Austria.¹⁶ In December, 1917, Count Czernin conceded the justice of the German claim for frontier rectifications and offered to give Germany about half of the government of Suwalki and a large part of the government of Lomza. Czernin recognized that a cession, transferring about a half a million Poles to Germany, would be extremely difficult and offered to try to persuade the Polish leaders to make the necessary sacrifice. The Germans, on the other hand, demanded the whole of Suwalki and Lomza and also an extension of the Thorn frontier as far as the heights of Wlodzlawek.

A second problem which engaged the attention of the negotiators was the disposition of the Dombrowa coal field located on the upper Silesian frontier.¹⁷ These mines had an annual total

fourths majority. Another suggestion was that a Polish parliamentary commission should be established instead of admitting the Poles into the Delegations. A third idea was that the Delegations should be abolished, and the common ministry should be made responsible to the several parliaments. No final conclusion was reached.

¹⁶Die Ursachen des Deutschen Zusammenbruchs, VIII, 320-23; Filasiewicz, No. 149, pp. 281-84. The German press violently opposed the adoption of the Austro-Polish solution. The Poles criticized any arrangement which was made without Polish participation.

¹⁷Gratz and Schüller, pp. 234-36. Foreign capital had invaded the region before the war. Five of the operating companies were owned or controlled by French capital, the remaining three being chiefly financed by German capitalists. The companies were about equally divided between the German and Austrian spheres of occupation. The mining concerns of the region were: Franco-Russian Mining Company, which leased the Russian state mines (Franco-Belgian); Franco-Italian Mining Company (French, with headquarters at Lyons); Warsaw Mining and Smelting Company (entirely Polish but financed by German banks); Coal Mining Com-

output of about seven million tons, valued before the war at from thirty-nine to fifty million rubles. As Austria-Hungary had imported from ten to thirteen million tons annually before the war, the ownership of these fields would relieve the Dual Monarchy from the necessity of buying German coal. Germany asked that the boundary should be established along the Vienna-Warsaw railway. This, the German representatives declared, was necessary in order that the upper Silesian coal area should have the necessary military protection. The Austro-Hungarian leaders argued, in turn, that should this be done the Dombrowa region would need protection similar to what Germany was demanding for upper Silesia. Moreover, the separation of the Dombrowa from Poland would jeopardize the existence of Polish industry, since most of its coal came from the Dombrowa area. They proposed instead that the German-Polish boundary should be fixed at the line drawn for the protection of the upper Silesian region in the late autumn of 1914 during the strategic retreat from Poland. This would leave the hill of Grodzeuc, the most important strategic point in the Dombrowa, in the possession of Germany.¹⁸

On December 28 Kühlmann declared that this concession was not satisfactory. The future German-Polish frontier must be the railway line from Granica to Strzemieszyce. The menace to the German mines would be too great even if Poland came under Austro-Hungarian control. The possession of valuable coal mines in Galicia made it unnecessary for the Austrians to obtain any of the Dombrowa area. In reply, the Austrian statesmen argued that even with the concessions which were demanded some German workers would be unprotected. Moreover, the country which controlled the mines would control Polish industry as this was the only source of coal that Poland possessed. The possession of mines in Galicia should not curtail their claims to a portion of the Dombrowa. Kühlmann, finally, agreed to reduce the demands as far as the military authorities would admit reduction and to refer the matter to a mixed commission.¹⁹ When this commission met on January 10, 1918, the German delegates demanded approximately four times as much of the Dombrowa as Kühlmann had desired and even a portion of Galicia.²⁰

pany at Sosnowice (French); the Czeladz Mining Company (French, with headquarters at Paris); Count Renard Mining Company (French, financed by the Credit Lyonnais); Saturn Company, Ltd. (German-Polish); and the Grodzied Mining Company (German).

¹⁸Gratz and Schüller, p. 236; Cramon, p. 125.

¹⁹Gratz and Schüller, p. 237.

²⁰The Austrians were chiefly irritated by the German demand for a part of Galicia.

The Austrian refusal broke off the negotiations.²¹ This conference of the commissioners at Katowice was followed by another meeting between the statesmen held at Berlin on February 5. Unable to come to an agreement, Czernin charged the Germans with a lack of good will in the matter.²²

Both parties to the controversy considered the Dombrowa coal field of extreme importance. Within the German government it was a matter of dispute between the army chiefs and the chancellor and was one of the factors which led to the removal of Bethmann from the government. Hence forth the will of the army leaders was all powerful, even the slight and ineffective opposition of the chancellor having been removed. Agreement with Austria could be obtained in the future only with the complete subordination of the statesmen of the Dual Monarchy to the German army leaders. This compliance, however, was not forthcoming. Tisza was opposed to annexing Poland, but he was equally opposed to surrendering the Dombrowa. He would rather give up the German alliance, he declared, than surrender the Dombrowa to Germany. He held that the Austro-Hungarians should simply refuse to evacuate the region. "Let the Germans give the order to fire," he advised, "if they wish to push matters to extremes."²³

Besides the problem of the boundaries of the future Polish state, the negotiators of the Dual Monarchy and Germany were vexed by a series of economic problems which would arise if the new state were created as planned. The Germans feared that the incorporation of Poland in the Dual Monarchy would give the latter a privileged position in Polish industry. On the other hand, they dreaded the competition of Polish industry in markets monopolized by Germany if Poland was incorporated economically in the German Empire. Finally, they were apprehensive of the political consequences, if Poland was permitted to develop markets in Russia. The Austro-Hungarian negotiators tried to minimize the Ger-

²¹Gratz and Schüller, p. 258: "It was pointed out that the German claims embraced the Bendzin district, in which were located the greatest industrial enterprises of Poland, i.e., almost all the coal mines, the Huta Bankowa Kronworks, and the highly developed factories of Sosnowice, Siedlce, and the Dombrowa. The strategical value of the frontier line proposed by Germany was, moreover, illusory; for, apart from the fact that such an industrial area, lying close to the German frontier, would be an even more vulnerable point than upper Silesia, this area would be no protection to German interests against modern long range gunnery."

²²Cramon, p. 144.

²³Gratz and Schüller, p. 240.

man objection to Polish economic unity with the Dual Monarchy by pointing out the indirect gains that Germany would derive as a result of the preponderance of German capital in Polish industry.²⁴ Associated with this theoretical discussion of economic relationships was the practical question of tariffs. The Germans insisted on the same treatment as Austria-Hungary. This was impossible, the negotiators of the Dual Monarchy declared, as it would nullify the Austro-German tariffs in effect at the time, if free trade were granted. On the contrary, if a tariff were levied, Austria-Hungary would be deprived not only of the Polish markets but also the markets of Galicia. In the end the whole question remained unsolved, the Germans hoping for reciprocal free trade with the Dual Monarchy and Poland.²⁵

Another problem which troubled the statesmen of the Central Powers was the question of the state debt.²⁶ The Germans demanded that Poland and the other areas taken from Russia should bear a portion of the public debt of the two monarchies to be known as a liberation debt. The Austrians objected as they believed that a debt would be a very heavy burden on the new government. On February 5 Count Rödern proposed that debts amounting to ten billion marks should be transferred to the eastern territories. Otherwise, he predicted a general flight of capital to these regions. To counterbalance the debt question, there arose the question of the disposition of the Polish crown domains, a territory of 1,810,350 acres.²⁷ The Germans had contended that these belonged to the old Russian state, and as they were the heirs of the old Russian administration, they could dispose of these domains as they desired. Nevertheless, in conjunction with the proposal of transferring indebtedness to the Polish area, the German government agreed that these lands would become neither German nor Austro-Hungarian property, and that these domains would be retained only as surety for the demands of the Central Powers.

A final problem which proved to be insoluble for the German and Austrian negotiators was the question of the disposition of the Polish railways if the Austro-Polish solution were adopted. The state lines of about twenty-two hundred miles and private lines of about two hundred miles had been reconstructed by the occupation authorities. Germany desired to retain the railways partly for strategic purposes and partly for trade with Russia.

²⁴Ibid., pp. 241-42.

²⁵Ibid., p. 245.

²⁶Ibid., pp. 248-49.

²⁷Ibid., p. 254.

The German statesmen asked that the ownership of the railroads should be vested in a private company, the stock of which should be owned by Germany. In justification the Germans pointed to the outlay in rebuilding the railroads as well as to the German economic interests involved. The statesmen of the Dual Monarchy countered by questioning the control of the means of communication within the boundaries of the monarchy by an outside power. They proposed, instead of the German plan, that the railways should be given to Poland and that Germany should be compensated for any loss which she would suffer by the transfer. It was impossible for the statesmen to agree, and when finally agreement was reached no practical value could be derived from the plan.²⁸

2. The Influence of Allied Propaganda on the Polish Situation

Someone has said that Poland owed her existence exclusively to the Bolsheviks, and that Poland would continue to exist only so long as the Bolsheviks remained in power in Russia.²⁹ Whether true or not, the statement gives some hint of the significance for Poland of the rise of Bolshevism in Eastern Europe. Among other results the Bolshevik revolution completely altered the situation faced by the Central Powers along the eastern front. The cessation of fighting furnished a needed respite for the military forces of Germany and Austria-Hungary. The occupied territories, however, now became areas for the spread of Russian propaganda. This took place with the consent of the German and Austrian military authorities.³⁰

At the same time, there was developing in the countries of the Entente a considerable sympathy for the Polish cause. This led, in turn, to Allied propaganda against the Central Powers with regard to Poland. Eventually, in spite of the most vigilant efforts of the occupying authorities, this propaganda began to penetrate into Poland. As we have seen, the Allied Powers had attempted to propagandize the Poles during the early months of the war, but it was not until January, 1917, that there was any appreciable influence on Polish opinion. On January 22, 1917, President Wilson declared to the Senate of the United States "that there should be a united, independent, and autonomous Poland"³¹

²⁸Ibid., pp. 241-42.

²⁹K. Korostowetz, The Rebirth of Poland (London, 1925),
p. 25.

³⁰Filasiewicz, No. 163, pp. 303-4.

³¹Ibid., No. 69, pp. 133-34.

and that security of life and worship, and industrial and social development should be granted racial minorities. While the Polish text of the speech was garbled, nevertheless, the Poles caught President Wilson's meaning and enthusiastic crowds gathered around the American consulate at Warsaw. The various Polish political groups including the Provisional Council of State, sent letters and telegrams of appreciation to the American president.³²

An "eleventh hour" attempt on the part of the czar to reconstruct Poland was frustrated by the revolution.³³ The provisional government of Russia acted more promptly. On March 28, 1917, a Russo-Polish committee was created to liquidate Polish affairs. Agreement within the committee disappeared as the Russian and the Polish members disputed the question of the disposition of Chelm.³⁴ In the meantime, the Russian government in an official proclamation to the Polish people (March 29, 1917) recognized Poland's right to an independent, autonomous development. To win Polish favor, this official Russian proclamation was greeted with approval by both Entente and Central governments.³⁵ Within Poland it also found response. The Provisional Council of State replied on April 6 but argued that the Russians could not fix the Polish boundaries by themselves. The Club of Parties in its reply

³²Ibid., pp. 137-38. A message, signed by Roman Dmowski from Warsaw, Jean Rozwadowski from Lemburg, and Maryan Seyda from Posen (to emphasize the unity of the three sections of Poland), declared that the new kingdom which the Germans were developing was economically and strategically at the mercy of the Central Powers.

³³Ibid., p. 136; Nos. 71-72, pp. 138-44. On January 25, 1917, the czar ordered the formation of a special commission for the planning of a constitution for a future Polish state and of its relation to the Russian empire. On March 11, 1917, the French government reaffirmed an agreement of 1916 giving Russia complete liberty to decide its western frontier at the close of the war.

³⁴Ibid., pp. 145-46.

³⁵Ibid., No. 75, pp. 151-55, 159, 163. On April 15, 1917, the Austro-Hungarian government affirmed the Russian proclamation and declared that it would be easy to make peace with Russia because of the "unity of view of the Central Powers and the Russian revolutionaries."

The Allies in telegrams and proclamations supported the Russian proclamation. Cf. ibid., No. 76 (Italian); No. 77 (British); No. 78 (French); No. 79 (British); No. 80 (Italian); No. 85 (French, Britain and Italy); No. 95 (British); No. 88 (British); No. 105 (Italian); No. 106 (British); Nos. 99, 100, 101, 102, 109, 110 (other countries).

at this time made the first reference to the Polish desire of access to the sea.

The Allied propaganda resulted within Poland in the organization of the "passivist" parties in the Polish Council of the Union of Parties.³⁶ In their first plenary session on August 9 this new organization chose an executive committee. The committee selected Stanislas Wojciechowski as its president and Joseph Kozuchowski as secretary. Within the committee, departments of war, foreign affairs, interior, and finance were organized. Special representatives, Roman Dmowski, Earasme Piltz, and Maurice Zamoyski, were sent to London, Paris, and Rome respectively. The duty of these representatives was to win recognition for the executive committee as the official Polish government. The accomplishment of this aim was facilitated by a similar movement which had arisen months previously in Entente countries. From January 26 to February 2 Poles of all parties had met in Lausanne in order to unify the efforts of the Poles of Poland, Russia, and America. Their efforts culminated on August 15 in the formation of the Polish National Committee. This committee, located in Paris, henceforth acted in concert with the Polish Council of the Union of Parties. The Paris Committee became the center of Polish activities in all Entente countries.

On August 28 the Polish National Committee requested the Allied governments to grant it recognition as the Polish government.³⁷ Such recognition was accorded the committee by France on September 20, by Great Britain on October 15, by Italy on October 30, and by the United States on December 1.³⁸ As the relationship of the Paris Committee to the Polish Council of the Union of Parties became clearer to the minds of the Entente statesmen, the latter also received their official recognition.³⁹

The desire of the Entente statesmen to destroy the allegiance of the nationalities within the dominions of the Central

³⁶Ibid., No. 114, pp. 213-14; No. 125, p. 239. A comparison of the membership of the Paris Committee with the leaders in the Polish Council indicates the close relationship of the two organizations. The members of the Polish National Committee were Roman Dmowski, Earasme Piltz, Jean Jordan Rozwadowski, Maryan Seyda, Constantin Skirmunt, Ladislas Sobanski, and Maurice Zamowski.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid., No. 126, pp. 241-42; No. 135, p. 256; No. 146, p. 273; No. 156, p. 295.

³⁹Ibid., Nos. 201-2, pp. 415-16; No. 240, pp. 509-10; No. 242, pp. 514-15; No. 246, pp. 517-18; No. 248, pp. 518-19.

Powers led to a prompt recognition of every effort made by the Poles to gain international interest in Poland's plight. Thus appeals for the unity and independence of Poland did not go unheeded; but were carefully considered and gravely answered.⁴⁰ The Bolshevik revolution made possible an even greater degree of favor to the Poles as there was no longer any danger of injuring one of the Allies. On January 5, 1918, Lloyd George declared that an independent Poland was an urgent necessity for the stability of western Europe,⁴¹ a declaration which was followed by Wilson's statement in "the Fourteen Points" three days later recognizing the Polish aspirations led to the creation of a Polish army in France.⁴³ On June 4, 1917 the French president, M. Poincaré, promulgated a decree for the formation of a Polish army to cooperate with the French forces on the west front.⁴⁴ In October the Franco-Polish military mission to the United States began a recruiting campaign in America for the new military organization.⁴⁵ On March 20 of the next year the French government transferred the administration of the Polish forces to the National Committee,⁴⁶ and in July granted military decorations and honors to Polish soldiers who had won distinction.⁴⁷ In the latter part of August General Haller was appointed commander-in-chief of the Polish army in France by the Paris Committee. He assumed his position on October 6 with the consent of the Entente military authorities.⁴⁸ The recognition of the Polish contingent by the British and Italian governments came a few days later.⁴⁹

⁴⁰Ibid., No. 125, pp. 237-40.

⁴¹Ibid., No. 166, p. 312.

⁴²Ibid., No. 168, p. 313; No. 222, pp. 465-67. The Versailles declaration of June 3 gave official sanction to the ideas which the Allied leaders had expressed.

⁴³Ibid., Nos. 103-4, pp. 193-96. In June, 1917, the Polish soldiers in the Russian army had asked permission to form a separate Polish army. Kerensky, minister of war for the provisional government, had refused their petition and requested them instead to join the Russian army.

⁴⁴Ibid., No. 97, pp. 183-85.

⁴⁵Ibid., No. 126, pp. 241-42.

⁴⁶Ibid., No. 202, pp. 415-16. Complete administrative control was not granted, but a large degree of advisory power was given.

⁴⁷Ibid., No. 232, pp. 491-92; Nos. 227-28, pp. 474-79.

⁴⁸Ibid., No. 259, pp. 539-40; No. 261, p. 544; No. 264, p. 544; No. 266, p. 557.

⁴⁹Ibid., Nos. 267-68, pp. 560-62.

In the meantime, every effort was made by the Allies to create dissatisfaction among the Poles by criticizing the peace arrangements which were made at Brest Litovsk. On March 19, 1918, the premiers and foreign ministers of the Entente issued a statement in which they declared: "Poland, whose heroic spirit has survived the most cruel of national tragedies, is threatened with a fourth partition, and to aggravate her wrongs devices by which the last trace of her independence is to be crushed are based on fraudulent promises of freedom."⁵⁰ This statement was a supplement to the declaration, which the Allies had sent to General Dowbor-Musnicki on March 2, in which the same statesmen had declared that they considered all treaties concluded without their participation and contrary to the principle of nationality as null and void.⁵¹ Other proclamations and manifestos, issued by the Allies, charged that Germany was making the Baltic states ancillary to her interests.⁵² Germany protested this interpretation of her action by declaring that the German government did not intend to take "advantage of these peoples and that not a single soldier had been pressed into service from these lands."

The month of August, 1918, bore additional fruit from the seed of Allied propaganda in the development of pan-Slavism.⁵³ In April a Congress of the Oppressed Nationalities of Austria-Hungary had been held in Rome under the sponsorship of the Allies. August brought other conferences within the territories of the Central Powers. But the significance of the movement was minimized by the rapid growth of nationalism.

3. The Peace of Brest Litovsk

The Bolshevik revolution of November 7, 1917, led to a complete collapse of the Russian opposition on the east front. The Bolsheviks requested all governments to make peace. The Central Powers responded favorably to the circular dispatch. On November 29 Count Hertling announced that he was able to find in the proposals made an acceptable basis for negotiations. In his reply he particularly emphasized the right of "self-disposition for the peoples of Poland, Courland, and Lithuania." The actual negotiations between the Central Powers and Russia began on December 3, 1917, and continued intermittently for four months. The

⁵⁰C. K. Cummings and Walter W. Pettit, Russian-American Relations, March 1917 to March 1920 (New York, 1920), p. 93.

⁵¹Ibid., No. 196, pp. 400-401.

⁵²Ibid., No. 181, pp. 349-50.

⁵³Ibid., No. 241, pp. 512-13.

chief delegates from the Central Powers were Richard von Kühlmann, the German foreign minister, General Max Hoffmann, commander-in-chief of the German armies on the east front, Count Czernin, and Fieldmarshal Csicseries. The Bolshevist delegation, of which there was a numerous company, was led by Trotsky.⁵⁴

The first sessions handled the question of an armistice, which was finally completed on December 15.⁵⁵ On December 22 the Russian delegates presented several principles as the basis of the negotiations. In the first place, they required that the territories occupied during the course of the war should not be annexed but ought to be evacuated as soon as possible. Secondly, they insisted that the independence of the peoples who had lost their political existence during the war should be reestablished, and that those nationalities which before the war had not been independent should decide their future by means of a referendum. Moreover, if a nationality opted to remain under a government composed of other nationalities its rights should be definitely guaranteed by treaty agreements. Three days later the Central Powers agreed to recognize the Russian conditions as a basis for discussion. They denied that they intended to annex the occupied territory and admitted that the independence of peoples should be restored if such independence had been lost during the war. With regard to granting referendums to nationalities and special rights to national minorities, they argued that the question of constitutionality as well as other internal conditions would make a consideration of such problems impossible. The chairman of the Russian delegation replied that, in spite of differences of opinion between them and the Central Powers, the view point presented by the Germans would permit the possibility of an agreement.

The next meeting was held on December 27, and again the Russian delegation took the initiative.⁵⁶ In return for the evacuation by Russian troops of territory belonging to Austria-Hungary, Turkey, and Persia they demanded the withdrawal of the armies of the Central Powers from Lithuania, Courland, Poland, and any other region of old Russia which had been occupied.⁵⁷ The peoples in these areas (the areas occupied by the Central Powers) were to be independent and to be given the right to decide their political

⁵⁴Czernin, p. 263; Handelsman, p. 46; Judah L. Magnes, Russia and Germany at Brest Litovsk (New York, 1919).

⁵⁵Filasiewicz, No. 154, pp. 293-94.

⁵⁶Trotsky asked adjournment until January 4 in order to give the Entente an opportunity to take part in the negotiations. The Germans objected that this was a waste of time.

⁵⁷Filasiewicz, No. 163, p. 304.

future immediately after the retreat of the armies of occupation. The representatives of Germany and Austria-Hungary countered by proposing that the Russians accept the declarations of the autonomous organizations already existing in Lithuania, Courland, and Poland. The Central Powers were ready, they said, to withdraw their armies from any of the Russian territories in which the people had not already decided its own future. The Russians denied that a true expression of the people had been obtained in the Baltic and in the Polish provinces occupied by Germany, and declared that such an expression could be obtained from a people only in the complete absence of foreign armies. The German attitude, as Prince Maximilian of Baden has since admitted, was an irreparable mistake, for it created an impression of insincerity in contrast with that of the Russians. Before adjournment, a mixed commission to study the question was appointed.⁵⁸

While the Bolshevik invitation to the Entente powers was without result, the Ukrainians seized the opportunity to participate in the conference. As we have seen, the Ukrainian national movement was fostered by the statesmen of the Dual Monarchy during the course of the war. As a result of the collapse of the Russian government, Ukrainian independence was proclaimed, and a national Ukrainian republic was formed. From the outset it adopted an anti-Polish attitude, as for example, in the passage of a law for the expropriation of land which was not directly cultivated by the proprietors and their families (an act therefore aimed at the Polish landlords of Ruthenia). The appearance of the Ukrainian delegates on Christmas day at the peace negotiations meant that an anti-Polish influence was interjected into the proceedings.⁵⁹

In the intermission, following the session of December 27, the Russians attempted to transfer the negotiations to Stockholm, but when the Central Powers demurred, the negotiations were resumed once more at Brest Litovsk on January 6, 1918. In the first meeting, the Ukrainian delegates were permitted to announce their plan of a federal league, composed of the former Russian territories, but five days elapsed before recognition as participants in the conference was extended to them by Count Czernin. Henceforth the negotiations were divided, in as much as the statesmen of the Central Powers dealt separately with the Russians and Ukrainians.

Meanwhile, the mixed commission (Central Powers and Rus-

⁵⁸Maximilian, Prince of Baden, The Memoirs of Prince Max of Baden, trans. by W. M. Caldero (London, 1928), I, 208.

⁵⁹Czernin, p. 268; Filasiewicz, No. 154, pp. 291-92.

sian), which had been previously selected, had entered upon a prolonged discussion of the peace conditions.⁶⁰ The Russian delegates reiterated their views on the representation of national groups and the evacuation of the occupied areas of Russia by the Central Powers. In reply General Hoffmann reminded the Russians that as a representative of the German high command, he considered them to have been defeated. The Central Powers were willing to grant all the political liberty compatible with the circumstances, but Germany was not willing to evacuate Courland, Lithuania, and Latvia. Kühlmann warmly supported the German military authorities by declaring that the military experts would have to judge of the possibility of evacuation and insisted that he could guarantee nothing beyond the time necessary for consultation. On January 18 further difficulty arose as the result of a map which was presented by General Hoffmann to the Russian delegation. This map traced a boundary only from the Baltic to Brest Litovsk. When the Russians inquired with respect to the boundary to be established south of Brest Litovsk they were curtly informed that the matter would be settled by the Central Powers and the Ukraine.⁶¹ Once more negotiations between the Bolsheviks and the statesmen of Germany and Austria-Hungary were discontinued without any material gain having been derived from the discussions.

The dilatory methods of the Russians in the negotiations as well as their continual emphasis upon the principle of the free expression of the peoples in the areas occupied by the Central Powers led to the demand by the Poles that the Polish government should be represented at Brest Litovsk. From January 7 to 13 the Council of Regency in person made its representations at Berlin and Vienna.⁶² The Polish premier likewise attempted to persuade the Central Powers to grant representation at the conference. In a telegram to Hertling, he argued that Polish participation in the peace negotiations was a logical consequence of the whole policy of reestablishing the Polish state. Such action by the Central Powers, he declared, would be a proof of their sincerity. Kucharzewski's request was supported in the Reichstag by Glabinski, but failure was predetermined on account of the

⁶⁰Filasiewicz, No. 172, pp. 320-22; Ludendorff, II, 186-87; Hoffmann, p. 219. Hoffmann denies the rumor, which was prevalent at the time, that he banged the table with his fist. Instead, he claims that he reminded the Bolshevik delegation of the inexorable facts of the military situation without even raising his voice.

⁶¹Filasiewicz, No. 163, pp. 304-8.

⁶²Ibid., Nos. 169-70, pp. 316-18; Hertling, pp. 54-55.

knowledge on the part of the German statesmen of the anti-Prussian feeling of the Poles.⁶³ The responsible statesmen, therefore, returned evasive replies. Count Hertling blamed the Russians for the non-admission of the Poles to the negotiations,⁶⁴ and the foreign secretary on February 19 excused the German government by asserting that the rapidity of the negotiations made Polish participation impossible.⁶⁵

At the same time the Russian delegates, knowing that inconvenience which would result for the Central Powers if the Poles were admitted to the conference, continued to urge that Polish participation was one of the basic principles involved in the negotiations. On January 11 Trotsky had repeated his demand that delegations from Poland, Lithuania, and Courland should be admitted to the conference. Czernin immediately consented to his proposal but with the restriction that the acceptance of the representatives of these peoples would also mean that the judgment of the delegations in favor of Austria-Hungary would have equal approval. Trotsky saw the quandary in which he was placed and asked for twenty-four hours in which to confer with his colleagues. On the following day he reasserted his original contention that there could be no true representation of the areas in question without the removal of the armies of occupation. On January 31 he demanded a reconsideration of the question of Polish representation and three days later once more declared that Poland occupied by the Central Powers was not qualified for participation in the negotiations. Wearied by his insistence, the statesmen of Germany and Austria-Hungary declared that they had come not to debate but to make a settlement with the Russian government. Undiscouraged, a few days later, Trotsky introduced two delegates from Poland who gave long harangues in Russian. The Germans thereupon charged the Russians with using the question of Polish representation to delay the negotiations.⁶⁶ The upshot was that the Poles were not represented at the conference, and the Bolsheviks experienced their first important diplomatic failure.

Meanwhile, Austro-Hungarian negotiations had continued with the delegation from the Ukraine. At the beginning the Ukrainian delegates demanded the province of Chelm (Cholm), the whole of Eastern Galicia, and Ruthenia for their new republic, but when the statesmen from the Dual Monarchy would not agree, these demands were modified. The Habsburg statesmen were reluctant to

⁶³Czernin, pp. 263-64.

⁶⁴Filasiewicz, No. 173, pp. 324-27.

⁶⁵Ibid., No. 174, pp. 328-29; No. 188, pp. 367-74.

⁶⁶Ibid., No. 173, pp. 324-27.

concede any of the territory demanded not only because of the loss which the monarchy would suffer, but also because of the unfavorable reaction which would be occasioned among the Poles. Consequently, the matter was referred to a crown council of the Dual Monarchy which met on the evening of January 22 at Laxenburg under the chairmanship of the emperor.⁶⁷ The matter was presented by Count Czernin. Chelm was demanded outright by the Ukrainian republic. The other Ukrainian areas in the Dual Monarchy were to be given a special status. In exchange, the Dual Monarchy would demand a commercial agreement which would give Austria-Hungary the necessary grain supplies which were so urgently needed at the time. The Polish residents in the Ukraine would be given "full reciprocity" with other Polish areas. The proposed agreement was approved by the Austrian premier, Dr. von Seidler, but was disputed by the Hungarian leader, Count Wekerle. The latter was supported by General Arz, who argued that the promise of Chelm to the Ukrainians would seriously disturb the Polish situation. The price demanded, declared the general, was too great, and it was possible to obtain the food which Ukraine provided without such a cession since the Ukraine was powerless to refuse if Austria-Hungary cared to use force.

Another point of view was presented by Dr. Gustav Gratz, economic advisor of the Austro-Hungarian foreign office. He maintained that the plan of incorporating Poland in the Dual Monarchy would fail even without the reaction which would come from the cession of Polish territory to the Ukraine because the extreme demands of Germany rendered such a solution of the Polish problem impossible. The enormous territorial reductions, the restrictions on Polish industry, the loss of Polish railways and state domains, as well as the imposition of part of the costs of the war upon the Poles would so weaken Poland that it would hardly be capable of living at all. Consequently, he believed that it was wiser to annex Rumania and relinquish Poland to Germany. The emperor terminated the discussion by emphasizing the necessity of peace and by signifying his will that the negotiations with the Ukrainian republic should be continued, even if territorial cessions were necessary. Once more a decision with regard to the Poles had been made as a consequence of the internal problems of the Dual Monarchy.

⁶⁷ Czernin, pp. 270-72; Arz, pp. 225-26; Arthur von Polzer-Hoditz, The Emperor Karl, trans. D. F. Tait & F. S. Flint (Boston and New York, 1928), p. 385; cf. Ernst Plener, Erinnerungen (Stuttgart and Leipzig, 1929), p. 470. The Emperor, Czernin, Burian, Stöger-Steiner, Arz, Seidler, and Wekerle were present.

On February 9 the treaty of peace was formally signed by the Central Powers and the Ukrainian republic. Chelm was given to the Ukraine. The Dual Monarchy promised to add Ruthenia and some sections of Eastern Galicia to Bukovina as a new crown land. In return grain for the starving millions of Austria-Hungary was promised by the Ukrainian government.⁶⁸

A storm of indignation immediately arose in Poland when the details of the agreement became generally known. The German military authorities promptly explained that they had had no share in the framing of the treaty and thus directed the Polish irritation against Austria-Hungary.⁶⁹ Public meetings, political organizations, riots and strikes gave expression to Polish feeling. The Council of Regency threatened to resign but finally decided to remain in office after voicing a vigorous protest. The cabinet resigned and was replaced by another which within a month found itself in opposition to the policy of the Dual monarchy. "Activists" as well as "passivists" supported the Polish government in its opposition to the Central Powers with respect to the Ukrainian treaty.⁷⁰

In other areas where Polish expression was possible, similar agitation appeared.⁷¹ On February 15 the "activists" of Lemburg dissolved their club and asked all other political clubs and parties to dissolve in order to "emphasize the solidarity of the nation." In the Austrian parliament the treaty brought on a struggle between the Polish and Ruthenian deputies as well as a bitter attack by the Polish delegates on the government. Likewise in the Prussian diet and in the German Reichstag similar attacks were made on what the Poles called "the crime of Brest Litovsk."

Yet, in spite of all their efforts, the Poles were unable to prevent the ratification of the treaty. On February 22 the treaty was formally approved by the Reichstag.⁷² The Austrian leaders on February 18, unable to obtain the approval of the treaty without Polish support made an interpreting convention with the Ukrainian Rada, providing for a mixed commission to settle the boundaries, but secretly in another convention sold out the

⁶⁸Filasiewicz, No. 177, pp. 233-35; No. 180, pp. 346-49; Lutz, I, 802-28; Czernin, p. 336; Gratz and Schüller, pp. 255-57.

⁶⁹Filasiewicz, No. 187, p. 364-78.

⁷⁰Filasiewicz, No. 190, p. 378; No. 209, pp. 430-35; Handelsman, p. 45.

⁷¹Gratz and Schüller, pp. 255-57; Filasiewicz, No. 182, pp. 351-56; No. 187, pp. 364-78; No. 200, pp. 412-14; No. 203-7, pp. 420-27.

⁷²Ibid., No. 187, p. 364.

Poles by agreeing to establish a special province, composed of Bukovina and a part of Eastern Galicia.⁷³ This deceit of the Austrian government, while undiscovered at the time, led in mid-summer to the fall of the Seidler cabinet.

The conclusion of a separate peace with Ukrainia brought little progress to the negotiations between Russia and the Central Powers. Finally, on February 10, the president of the Russian delegation declared to the commission that Russia would not sign a formal treaty of peace, but that the state of war between Russia and the Central governments was at an end.⁷⁴ On the same date all Russian forces on all fronts were ordered to demobilize. At first the delegation of the Central Powers received this announcement as a definite end of the state of war, but the German military authorities interpreted it as a denunciation of the armistice and began war operations on February 19. The Russian Council of Commissars immediately announced that they were ready to subscribe to the peace conditions which were presented to them by their enemies. Peace was concluded on March 3, 1918. For the nonce, German policy, unchecked by ally or foe, was supreme in the areas of occupation on the eastern front.

4. The Polish Diplomacy of the Central Powers from April, 1918, to the Close of the World War

After the peace with Russia the Central Powers once more attempted to formulate a plan for the final settlement of the future of Poland. Within the Dual Monarchy circumstances, for the time being, had changed the official attitude in regard to the plan to be adopted.⁷⁵ In April, 1918, Czernin resigned and Burian was reinstated into the foreign office. But more significant was the changed opinion of the emperor. Charles as a result of the extreme indignation of the Poles over the cession of Chelm to Ukrainia had begun to doubt the feasibility of trying to carry through the Austro-Polish solution. He turned instead to the "candidate solution" of the problem. Under this plan he proposed to give the Polish crown to an Austrian archduke, but Poland itself would be placed under the supervision of Germany. A definitive agreement, however, could not be obtained with Germany. The kaiser was inclined to agree to the emperor's proposal, because

⁷³Ibid., No. 184, pp. 358-59; No. 198, p. 407; Windischgratz, p. 185.

⁷⁴Ibid., No. 163, pp. 302-5.

⁷⁵Stein, pp. 228-29.

he feared the danger of a great Polish state under Austrian overlordship. Yet, despite his approval, agreement failed because the German political and military authorities could not harmonize their opinions.⁷⁶

On the failure of the "candidate" plan Count Burian urged once more a solution of the problem along Austro-Polish lines.⁷⁷ The particular version of the plan which he suggested in May, 1918, had as its essential distinction from other Austro-Polish schemes the idea of a Poland intimately related to the German-Austro-Hungarian alliance. In a meeting of the representatives of the Central Powers on May 12 his plan was accepted in principle, but the German high command placed as many obstacles in the way as possible.⁷⁸ All the earlier conditions, particularly those which concerned the economic relationships of the powers, were urged as items which must be settled before a Polish king could be elected. In addition, they demanded that in the event that the Emperor Charles or some prince of the German confederation were chosen king, a special convention would be necessary. The Austrian statesmen acquiesced to all the conditions demanded, all except the demand for a special convention, which they feared would influence the Poles against an Austro-Polish solution because of the limitation which would thereby be placed on Polish sovereignty.

On July 11 and 12 Burian, Hertling and Kühlmann met again to discuss the question.⁷⁹ The meeting resulted in a deadlock. Thereupon the German press inspired by the Wilhelmstrasse began to attack the Austrian plan. On July 18 Count Wedel, the German ambassador to Vienna, suggested a compromise.⁸⁰ The Poles were to be given the free election of their ruler, but if the Polish king did not choose to reside in Warsaw, further negotiations would be necessary. On August 3 the further proposal was made by Germany that the two powers (Germany and Austria-Hungary) should themselves select the king.

Meanwhile, the victory of the Entente army on the western

⁷⁶Arz, p. 129; Filasiewicz, No. 225, p. 469.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 468; Handelsman, p. 34.

⁷⁸Gratz and Schüller, pp. 258-61; Burian, p. 260; Windischgratz, p. 181; Karl Bachem, Vorgeschichte, Geschichte und Politik der deutschen Zentrums Partei (Cologne, 1932), IX, 489. The Catholic Center party led by Erzberger demanded a Bavarian Catholic prince instead of a Prussian Protestant prince because the Poles were Catholic.

⁷⁹Burian, pp. 256-57.

⁸⁰Gratz and Schüller, pp. 258-61.

front marked the beginning of the ultimate defeat and collapse of the Central Powers. To conserve their gains in the east, should circumstances force them to make concessions in the west, the Central Powers continued to search for a definitive solution of the Polish question. On August 14 the two emperors met with the two foreign ministers at Spa.⁸¹ At this conference the Polish question was incidental to the larger problem of the future alliance between the two powers. But a week later, Burian, as a result of the urgent representations of Count Roniker and Prince Radziwill,⁸² both members of the Polish cabinet, once more reopened the question. The German rejoinder was a restatement of their demands for territorial concessions.⁸³ Burian, irritated by the German reply, thereupon flatly demanded free election for the Poles and the equal participation of Austria-Hungary with Germany in the solution of the problem. Eventually, the foreign ministers agreed that the various details should be worked out by a mixed commission appointed by the two powers, and that a conference of the statesmen of Germany and Austria-Hungary should be called on September 24 to listen to the commission's report.

In preparation for the impending negotiations the Austro-Hungarian commissioners were instructed to exchange views rather than to negotiate agreements.⁸⁴ The basic viewpoints of the

⁸¹Die Ursachen, VIII, 326, gives notes, dated July 2-3, of the demands to be presented at Spa: "(a) Austria-Hungary to give security for a personal union--(that is, given security if Poland was united to the Dual Monarchy by means of a personal union); (b) Poles should nominate a candidate; (c) Germany to retain economic domination of Poland, Poland to remain as Germany's Durchfuhrland to the east; (d) Germany to retain leading control of the railroads; (e) Poland to bear part of the cost of the war; (f) Germany to claim from Poland certain frontier rectifications, the Austrians to be forced out of Poland." According to Die Ursachen, the materials for the Spa conference are not in the archives, and on that account the truth concerning the events is difficult to ascertain.

⁸²Handelsman, p. 205; Ludendorff, II, 256. Count Roniker and Prince Radziwill conferred with the kaiser on August 14, and according to Ludendorff, the Polish delegates petitioned the kaiser to accept the Polish crown. The kaiser preferred, on the contrary, to accept the candidacy of the Archduke Charles Stephan. Cf. Burian, pp. 262-63, who says that the Polish envoys claimed that the kaiser interpreted their words as favorable to himself.

⁸³Gratz and Schüller, pp. 258-61; Handelsman, p. 230.

⁸⁴Gratz and Schüller, p. 262-64.

Habsburg monarchy were that there should be freedom of election for a king in Poland, that Poland must remain within the circle of the Central Powers, and that when the proper time had arrived the Poles should be admitted to the negotiations. If a buffer state were created, the Central Powers must mutually guarantee each other's territory; but this plan would be impossible if the Germans secretly promised Galicia to the Poles in exchange for Polish support of a German plan. In all cases the integrity of Congress Poland must be respected, as it would be very difficult to maintain order if territorial cessions were made to either one of the powers. If the Austro-Polish solution were adopted, then the settlement of relationships would be the business of the Dual Monarchy and Poland. This must be made a condition of the alliance between the Central Powers. On the contrary, if the German plan of a king residing in Warsaw were adopted, then the Austrian commissioners were to insist that the Polish king be granted full sovereign powers, and that no military convention be made with the new Polish state unless both members of the Central Powers were included. The representatives, however, were to deal not with the method of restoration but with the conditions for the restoration of an autonomous Poland. The aim was to make the conditions as similar as possible (whatever method was proposed) in order to create a possibility of union with Galicia, which in turn would give an impulse towards the adoption of the Austro-Polish plan. Therefore, the Austrians thought that every attempt should be opposed which would extend to Poland the prospect of special disadvantages, such as extensive frontier cessions, in the event of the adoption of the Austro-Polish solution, or the prospect of special disadvantages, such as reunion with Lithuania, should Poland be incorporated by Germany.

The German representatives were also given instructions.⁸⁵ It was recognized that Burian would insist on the Austro-Polish plan. Therefore, the Austrian delegates were to be definitely informed that the adoption of such a plan would be possible only if there were extensive rectifications of the Polish-German frontier in favor of Germany. The German statesmen recognized the desire of the Poles for expansion to the eastward. The commissioners were instructed, in consequence, to pose as the protectors of Polish claims. They were ordered, however, to consider the possibility of establishing Lithuania under personal union with Germany or Prussia, or in the event of the union of Vilna with Poland, to secure an alliance with the latter based on treaties providing for the settlement of such matters as military, postal,

⁸⁵Ibid.; Filasiewicz, No. 252, pp. 527-28.

and economic relationships.⁸⁶

The discussions of the commissioners of Germany and Austria-Hungary during the month of September, 1918, resulted in the elimination of most of the items of dispute between the two countries.⁸⁷ The occupying powers decided to form the Polish territories acquired from Russia into a state in which the government would be a hereditary, constitutional monarchy. The Poles were to have the right of freely electing their king, to whom full sovereign powers would be guaranteed by the governments of Germany and Austria-Hungary. The Central Powers were to be on an equal basis in regard to all relationships with the new Polish state. The laws for the protections of German national interests, issued by the German occupying authorities in agreement with the new Polish government, were to be extended throughout the sphere of occupation and maintained permanently. Poland was to contribute to the war debts of the Central Powers only in proportion to her taxable capacity. This contribution was to be on approximately the same level per person as in Germany and Austria-Hungary. Similarly, Poland was to assume a portion of the public debts of the Central Powers. With respect to the state domains and the Polish railways the following formula was adopted:

Poland will have the unlimited right to dispose of the former real property of the Russian crown and state in the Polish territories conquered by the allied armies, subject to the condition laid down by Germany that the state railways in these territories shall be handed over to a railway company.

This company was to be formed in accordance with Polish laws, but Austria-Hungary was willing to grant to Germany equal status with herself in its control only if the "buffer state" solution were adopted. Germany, on the contrary, desired not joint but paramount control of the Polish railways. Other details agreed upon were the mutual guarantee of each other's Polish territories by the Central Powers, the exclusion of Suwalki from the new Polish state, and that instruction to favor Poland be given the commissioners for the settlement of the Ukrainian-Polish boundary.⁸⁸

During the last month of the war the Central Powers continued to negotiate concerning the method to be followed. Gradually the German statesmen, as the opposition of the Polish govern-

⁸⁶Ibid., No. 165, pp. 310-17; No. 207, pp. 424-25; No. 233, pp. 528-30.

⁸⁷Eurian, p. 264, says that all controversial items disappeared, but evidently his statement is incorrect.

⁸⁸Gratz and Schüller, pp. 265-73.

ment to their regime increased and it became more and more apparent that failure would be their lot on the west front, altered their opinion and once more favored the Austro-Polish plan.⁸⁹ Within the Dual Monarchy the plan which was finally elaborated was as follows:

1. The autonomous Polish state enters by the free election of his Imperial, Royal, and Apostolic Majesty as king of Poland, into an organized union with Austria-Hungary and is united with Galicia.
2. The existence of this union under the succession law prevailing in Austria-Hungary is to be laid down by extending the Pragmatic Sanction⁹⁰ with all its provisions to Poland.
3. The internal autonomy and independence of Poland is granted within the Union.
4. Foreign affairs and everything connected with them are common to Austria-Hungary and Poland.
5. The formation of the defense force will rest upon similar principles in Austria-Hungary and Poland and be under a common Supreme Command, and the Polish Army will receive such organization as shall seem calculated to secure the object of a common defense of the union.
6. Politico-commercial affairs (customs area) shall be settled in common.
7. Austria-Hungary and Poland shall have a similar currency system.
8. Poland shall have an equal voice in all matters of common concern and in all those which have to be settled by common agreement.
9. The detailed application of these principles will be embodied in a Pact of Union, the elaboration of which is reserved to influential personages in Austria-Hungary and Poland. The organic provisions laid down by the Pact of Union will in due course be incorporated in the Constitu-

⁸⁹Lutz, p. 575.

⁹⁰This refers to the Pragmatic Sanction of Charles VI which by the Hungarian law of 1772-73 proclaimed the female line in Hungary and declared that all of the kingdoms of the countries of the emperor outside of Germany should come "indivisible and inseparable." Cf. Jaszi, pp. 60-61.

sions of the two States of the Monarchy, as well as in Poland, by means of similar laws.⁹¹

In the final paragraph (10) the prospect was held out of a withdrawal of the army of occupation so soon as Poland should possess an administrative system of her own. The close of the war and the dissolution of the Dual Monarchy made impossible any further negotiations for the formulation of a Polish policy by the Central Powers.

⁹¹Ibid., pp. 274-77. The Austrian premier Hussarek desired Clause 6 to state explicitly the methods to be used in the settlement, and that Clause 8 should include a statement for the making of agreements concerning Galicia, and a permanent fiscal and commercial alliance.

CHAPTER IV

THE GOVERNMENT OF POLAND DURING THE WAR

1. The Organization of the Military Governments of Lublin and of Warsaw

The complement of the attempt to formulate a Polish policy by the Central Powers in the course of the war was the actual administration of the Polish areas controlled or occupied by Germany and Austria-Hungary during the same period. This administration arose not because of any specific policy that was adopted but as a result of the necessity for government in the conquered territory. From the outset it was of a provisional character because the rapidly changing fortunes of war on the east front during 1914 and 1915 made possible only measures of a temporary nature. When Russian Poland was finally completely conquered in 1915 these arrangements were retained, for the civilian heads of the occupying governments were unable to agree on a proper substitute, and because the military leaders were anxious to retain an administration which was able to appropriate Polish resources most readily for the needs of the war.

In anticipation of the time when Congress Poland would be conquered, the Central Powers on January 10, 1915, at Posen signed a treaty of partition for administrative purposes. Later conventions signed at Katowice on April 20-22 and at Teschen on December 14 of the same year partitioned the conquered area for the period of the war.¹ Meanwhile two military governments had been

¹Filasiewicz, Nos. 10, 24; Handelsman, p. 73. The line of demarcation was traced in such a way that from the point where it touched the frontiers of three states (Germany, Austria, and Russia), named Dreikaiserecke, it followed the railroad from Warsaw to Vienna (which remained in the possession of Germany) for eighty kilometers, thence to Czeszochowa. The territories, situated to the west of that line, fell to Germany, and those to the east were given to Austria, except Czeszochowa and Bedzin, which remained in German hands. The convent and church in Czeszochowa was retained by the Austrians and formed an Austrian enclave in the town. The line followed the Warta river to its junction with the Pilca and thence to the front.

created: a German administration definitely located at Warsaw on September 4, 1915, and an Austrian government seated at Lublin on October 1.² The boundaries of the two governments coincided almost exactly with the frontiers resulting from the third partition (1795), and it was this fact which led the Poles to fear that the occupation of the Central Powers was equivalent to a new division of their fatherland.³

The territory of Congress Poland occupied by the German armies was under the control, in the first instance, of the military command in the east (Oberkommando der Ostarmeen), commonly known as the Oberost. The first civil administration had been organized at Breslau, thence shifted to Posen and Kalisz, and finally seated at Warsaw. General von Beseler, the conqueror of Antwerp, was appointed governor-general on September 4, and for the remainder of the war he was the responsible head of the civil administration. Areas conquered later were not annexed to the Warsaw government but remained directly under the control of the Oberost.⁴

It had been planned that the institution of the governments of Warsaw and Lublin (officially known as general-governments) which were to restore conditions existing in the kingdom during the Russian administration would have two governors-general whose position would be as alike as possible.⁵ In effect the governor-general of Warsaw was given powers much more numerous than and a liberty of action much superior to those which his Austrian colleague enjoyed. He was the supreme legislative and administrative authority in the area and was responsible not to the military authorities but to the imperial chancery and was empowered to correspond directly with the civil government. In addition he retained extensive military powers and in consequence was without question the most powerful official in Poland during the war.

The territory of the general-government of Warsaw was divided into districts, and in each a responsible officer (Kreis-chef) was appointed by the governor-general.⁶ The Kreischef was

²Handelsman, pp. 29-30; Witold Jeszke, Der Rechtsgrund der Neugründung des Polnischen Staates (Posen, 1918), p. 35. All voluntary agencies in Warsaw were suppressed September 8-12.

³Blociszewski, p. 14.

⁴Handelsman, p. 78.

⁵Ibid., pp. 79-80; Wolfgang von Kries, "Deutsche Staatsverwaltung in Russisch-Polen," Preussische Jahrbücher, CCXXXIII (1933), 148-49.

⁶Handelsman, p. 80.

assisted in the government of the district by a district assembly (Dietine). These assemblies were a result of an ordinance issued on January 22, 1916. Their membership varied in proportion to the population of the district, and at first the members were appointed by the Kreischef. Later with the promulgation of the election law of November 1, 1916, assemblymen were elected by the people. The Kreischef was the president of the assembly. All resolutions of the Dietine had to be approved by him. The powers of the Dietine were very limited. It could initiate legislation only for poor relief and public health. Such matters as budget, taxes, loans, communications, and the creation and regulation of offices could be considered by the district assemblies only on the suggestion of the Kreischef. If, however, a Dietine chose to reject a suggestion made by the Kreischef, it was necessary for the matter to be reviewed by the governor-general.

The government of cities and towns in the German general-government followed the plan laid down in the Prussian law for municipalities.⁷ The responsible municipal official was the Burgemeister (in Warsaw he was called city president). He was the executive head of the commune. He was advised and assisted by the Schöffen and with the Schöffen formed the executive body of the city. The central organ of the system (in theory but not always in practice) was the city council composed of twenty-four or thirty-six members (Verordneten). It was expected that the council would eventually control the city administration by the election of public officials and by the direction of public affairs. In the smaller municipalities (less than 20,000 inhabitants) the council and the executive board were combined. The other officials of the cities and towns derived their powers from the executive board and were responsible to it.

The municipality was to have such corporation rights as self-administration and financial independence. It was charged with matters relating to transportation (within the city), care of the poor, schools (except when reserved by the Warsaw government), fire protection, health, and morals. The most notable exception to the business normally placed under city control was the police administration, which was reserved by the general-government. In order to maintain strict control of the people the chiefs of police, who exercised broad powers in the administration, were appointed by the governor-general.

The administration of justice was similarly retained by the military government of Warsaw.⁸ All cases involving treason,

⁷Ibid., p. 82.

⁸Ibid., p. 94; Kries, Preussische Jahrbücher, CCXXXIII, 156-58.

acts against the army or the military authorities, opposition to specific arrangements of army officers, such as those frequently established by local commanders for the "security of the army," the excesses of soldiers, pillage on battlefields, and the extortion of objects belonging to the sick, wounded, or prisoners of war were reserved to the competence of the strictly military courts. Local justice of the peace courts were established, which they exercised original jurisdiction of all cases except suits against the German Empire, a German state, or a German dependency. Appellate jurisdiction from the lower courts was exercised by district tribunals, which might become courts of the first instance if the case was of sufficient importance. Appeals from the district courts were taken to the supreme court for the whole area. All judges were appointed either by the governor-general or the Kreischef. Their qualifications were those stipulated in the German judiciary act of 1877. Poles usually neither could nor cared to qualify. The result was the appointment of Germans who were ignorant of both the laws and language of the inhabitants and who had little sympathy with them. In September, 1917, the administration of the courts was placed in Polish hands, but even then only a few Poles accepted office.

In the Austrian zone of occupation, the control was given in the winter of 1914-15 to the supreme command of the Austro-Hungarian army (Armeeoberkommando, abbreviated AOK).⁹ The AOK was invested with all the attributes of authority and strictly subordinated the local authorities and deprived them of all independence. The occupied territory was divided into two districts, the administration of which was exercised by military authorities known as the Kreiskommando. The authority intermediary between the Kreiskommando and the AOK was the Armeetappenkommando, whose character was strictly military but to which was joined a civil commissariat (Landeskommissariat). The latter consisted not only of civil functionaries but also of doctors, veterinarians, engineers, and employees of the postal and telegraph system. The food administration was in the hands of the military authorities.

The conquest of southern and eastern Poland after the battle of Gorlice made necessary the expansion and the transformation of this government.¹⁰ On May 17, 1915, two military governments were established. One of these was at first located at Miechow and later transferred to Kielce. A second government was

⁹Hugo Kerchnawe et al., Die Militarverwaltung in den von den Oesterreichisch-Ungarischen Truppen Besetzten Gebieten (Vienna, 1928), p. 12; Handelsman, pp. 74-75.

¹⁰Handelsman, p. 76.

seated at Piotrkow until September 2, 1915, when it was incorporated in the first at Kielce. On October 1, the government of Kielce was taken to Lublin, where it remained for the duration of the war. At the beginning the eastern districts of Chelm, Hrubieszow and Tomaszow, consisting of mixed Polish and Ruthene population, were separately administered. Eventually, after considerable pressure from the Poles, these districts were added to the government of Lublin.

Gradually the powers of the Etappenkommando were absorbed by the AOK, only to be transferred to the general-government when it was finally located at Lublin.¹¹ Nevertheless, the AOK remained the final authority in the administration. It promulgated the laws and executed the essential ordinances. It could modify any laws already in force. The general-government could promulgate laws only on the authorization of the AOK. The AOK published the official journal (Verordnungsblatt) of the administration. It reserved for itself all relations with the German government. Its powers, therefore, in contrast with those exercised by the Oberost were much greater, while the powers of the general-government of Lublin in contrast to the similarly organized German authority were much less.

Yet, in spite of its limitations, the general-government of Lublin was of considerable importance in the business of governing the area of the Austrian occupation.¹² All matters not especially reserved by the AOK were under its authority. The chief executive officer was the governor-general, who had two assistants, one military and one civil. For purposes of administration the general-government was divided into three sections, military, civil, and economic. The economic section was divided, in turn, into two branches, production and exportation. For administrative reasons the economic section was also separated into three groups: the first for general economic, forest, and industrial affairs; the second for the administration of food supplies; and, finally, an office for statistics.

Like the German, the Austrian area was divided into districts (twenty-two) with a district officer (Kreischef) as the responsible administrator in each. Associated with the Kreischef was a civil commissioner. Subordinated to the Kreischef in each district were the provincial sub-commanders and the chiefs of police. Each district administration had six branches: a military administration, an economic administration, a military tribunal, a civil tribunal, a police administration, and a forest of-

¹¹Ibid., p. 77.

¹²Kerchnawe, p. 12; Handelsman, p. 78.

fice. In order to give some semblance of self-government, district assemblies (Dietines) were established. Their membership was fixed at twenty-four for each 100,000 inhabitants with an additional member for each 10,000 or fraction thereof above that number. The district commander, or in his stead the civil commissioner, served as president of the Dietine. A committee from the assembly, of six members, was associated with the president of the assembly for the supervision of all legislation. The chief matters handled by the Dietine were poor relief, construction of roads and railroads, the development of navigable rivers, the establishment of hospitals and clinics, and other business if referred to the assembly by the administration.

The government of the cities and towns in the Austrian zone of occupation was similar to that in the general-government of Warsaw.¹³ The chief functionaries in the larger cities were the president, two vice-presidents, and six to eight members of the executive board. In the smaller cities and towns the same service was performed by the mayor, his assistant, and four assessors. The central organ of the municipal government was the council. Its membership varied from twenty-four to sixty in proportion to the population. The city officials were elected by the council but were confirmed in office by the governor-general. Contrary to the Prussian system but in conformity to the method in vogue in Galicia, the president of the council was held to be the responsible municipal officer by the general-government. He was empowered to levy fines up to five-hundred kronen and to sentence to imprisonment of not over four weeks for the violation of municipal ordinances. Theoretically the municipal governments were granted freedom of action in dealing with economic questions, health, and the cultural development of the community, but practically every municipal activity had to conform to the desires of the Austrian administration. For the governor-general could annul the elections, dissolve the municipal council, and generally regulate the administration of the city when such matters as the municipal budget, the levying of taxes, and the granting of monopolies were submitted for approval.

During the winter of 1914-15 the administration for the enforcement of law and order was completely revamped by the AOK.¹⁴ The withdrawal of the Russians had taken away most of the court officials from the area. In consequence a new judicial system had to be constructed. The Polish rural justices and assessors were reestablished, but in the municipalities a civil military

¹³Handelsman, pp. 88-93.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 94; Kerchnawe, pp. 11-12.

court was instituted which had appellate jurisdiction over the rural courts in the surrounding country. Appeals from the original jurisdiction exercised by the urban courts had to be taken to the tribunal associated with the district commander and from there to the AOK. The judges were chosen by the Kreischef from the Poles of Galicia or from the Austrians who possessed some knowledge of Polish or other Slav idiom which made it possible for them to carry on business with the people. All other courts such as those spontaneously established after the retreat of the Russians were suppressed.

Not only was the AOK the source of law and the final authority over the courts, but it was also the supreme head of the police administration in the government of Lublin.¹⁵ For purposes of inspection the whole area was divided into three departments with offices located at Kielce, Radom, and Lublin. The duty of the chiefs of inspection (Governmentinspizierende), whose offices were located in these cities, was not defined, but their role consisted in maintaining a careful surveillance of conditions in their department and in reporting the information which they gathered to the AOK. Thus, for example, they maintained a close watch over the administration of the general-government, the conduct of the district commanders, and the general behavior of the troops of the area. Subordinated to the departmental administration were the sixty-seven police districts of Austrian Poland. In each a corps of one hundred gendarmes was maintained. These corps were recruited from the inhabitants of the area or were drawn from the Austrian army.

The essence of the system which was established in Congress Poland by the German government is to be found primarily in the personnel of the bureaucracy rather than in the particular form of administration established. General von Beseler was a capable officer of the German army and his appointment to the office of governor-general brought a military discipline into the administration. This quality in the administration was strengthened by the appointment of Prussians to most of the available offices in the area. It has been estimated that approximately 13,000 Prussian officials, drawn mainly from the cities, were used in the general-government of Warsaw.

In the Austrian zone more Poles were used in the administration than in the government of Warsaw, and the usual practice was to choose officials who were at least able to speak the Polish language.¹⁶ The reason for this attitude is to be found not

¹⁵Handelsman, p. 77; Kerchnawe, p. 12.

¹⁶Arz, pp. 188-90; Kerchnawe, pp. 33, 36, 37.

in any greater trust in the Polish people by the Austrian authorities than that held by the German leaders, but rather in the fact that the government of Lublin was always subordinated and regulated by the AOK. The first governor-general was General von Diller. Even though he was sympathetic with the Poles he was unable to render them any material benefit because of the constant interference of the AOK at the instigation of the bureau of espionage (K-Stelle). On April 26, 1916, General von Diller was replaced by General Karl Kuk who spoke only German. A year later (April, 1917) General Kuk was replaced by a Pole, General Szeptycki, and another Pole, Georges Madeyski, was appointed civil commissioner. The Austrian authorities hoped that these appointments would quiet the Polish agitation against the occupation, but to their surprise Szeptycki soon became a leader of the discontented factions. After the treaty of Brest-Litovsk he and his colleague were forced to resign and General Anton Liposcak became the governor-general. The frequent change in the men who occupied the position of governor-general resulted in a further diminution of the importance of the office.

As the war continued, more Poles were gradually drawn into the work of administration.¹⁷ Two reasons were advanced for the development of self-government in both areas of occupation. The first reason was practical; the authorities desired to be able to shift the responsibility in case of failure to the local elements in order to prove their political incapacity. The second motive was political; the statesmen of the Central Powers were anxious to prove that their governments desired to benefit Poland in spite of the war, and to convince the Polish people of the comparative superiority of the general-governments of Warsaw and Lublin over the former Russian regime, and thus win the sympathetic support of the Poles.

The same considerations may be cited for the granting of the franchise to the Polish people. On the publication of the first municipal law on June 16, 1916, the people of the municipalities in the German administrative area were promised the franchise.¹⁸ The first municipal officers, however, were appointed, and the law remained ineffective until August 12, 1916. When the law went into effect, Warsaw and the towns of less than 20,000 inhabitants were exempted from its operation. An exception was made of Warsaw because a special law relating to it had been issued on the preceding May 5. Finally on November 1, 1916, a gen-

¹⁷ Handelsman, p. 81.

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 83-86; Kries, Preussische Jahrbucher, CCXXXIII, 148.

eral law embracing all of the territory of the government of Warsaw was issued.

The franchise which was granted in these various decrees although universal was neither equal nor direct.¹⁹ The electorate in large cities (including Warsaw) was divided into six classes: (1) owners of real estate, women being enabled to vote by proxy; (2) commercial and industrial leaders; (3) intellectuals; (4) little industrials, merchants, and artisans; (5) taxpayers paying a tax on rentals; (6) all other persons. In the smaller cities and in voting for members of the Dietines a three-class voting system was adopted. The first class was composed of the leaders in commerce and industry; the second class were the owners of immovable property and the free professions; and the third class included all other persons. For the district elections, the great landowners formed the first class, the members of the rural and the members of the city communes formed the second and third classes respectively. In the cities the council was elected by the people with each of the six (or three as the case might be) classes sharing equally. The council chose the other officers except in Warsaw where the more important officials were appointed by the governor-general. In the district elections an indirect method of election, modelled on the Prussian method, was introduced.

In the Austrian area the franchise was less liberal than in the general-government of Warsaw.²⁰ The first laws were not issued until August 18, 1918; cities were set off in distinct classes as well as the electorate. The four cities, Lublin, Kielce, Piotrkow, and Radom, had an electorate consisting of five classes of voters: (1) the free professions; (2) commercial and industrial leaders; (3) real estate owners; (4) taxpayers, paying a tax on their fortunes; and (5) all other persons. In all other municipalities classes (1) and (4) were combined. The election to the Dietine was by three classes, of which the first was made up of owners of real estate (e.g., the great landowners, the proprietors of property valued at thirty thousand kronen, the owners of factories employing at least one hundred workers) and the merchants and industrials paying the highest taxes. The second class came from the cities, the electoral colleges of which were formed by the municipal council and the officers of the city government. The third class was composed of the rural communes, the voters of which elected electors, who, in turn, elected the mem-

¹⁹Handelsman, pp. 81-87; Kries, Preussische Jahrbücher, CCXXXIII, 148-49.

²⁰Handelsman, pp. 87-93.

bers of the district assembly. Voters were required to be males, thirty years of age, and able to read and write the Polish language. Finally, in order more completely to safeguard Austrian interests, all voters were divided into two groups, active and passive. The basis of classification was the attitude manifested towards the authorities of occupation. All opposed to the general-government (active) were disqualified for the higher offices, and only the friends of the government (passive) were eligible to such positions.

The introduction of local autonomy did not bring the German and Austrian authorities closer to the Polish people.²¹ The authorities desired the aid of the Poles and their support only in order to make the system function smoothly. The Poles desired self-government in order to have agencies which would protect them against the demands of the occupation authorities. Because of these essentially contradictory ideas as to the purpose of self-government, conflict arose between the Poles and the governing authorities.

An example of the conflict which arose between the Poles and their masters is the Warsaw election of July 16, 1916.²² In this election only one class was permitted to vote; all the other classes had adopted a list which did not meet the approval of the general-government. At Lodz a similar election resulted in a municipal council consisting of twenty-eight Poles, twenty-six Jews, seven Germans, and four others.²³ The council was not permitted to meet for several months because the general government would not permit the Polish councillors to share in the administration. At Lublin the criticism of the city government of the authorities led to the dissolution of the council on March 29, 1918, and to the government of the city thereafter by a functionary appointed by the Austrian administration.²⁴

2. The Polish Legions and the Kingdom of Poland

As we have seen, the Polish legions had been unable to retain the independent position which they had sought to obtain but had been forced to accept the control of Austrian authorities. Their leader Pilsudski soon realized that independence through the agency of the Central Powers was a dream improbable of ful-

²¹Ibid., p. 92.

²²Ibid., p. 85.

²³Ibid., p. 86.

²⁴Ibid., p. 93.

fillment. Consequently, at the beginning of the year 1915 he urged that the Poles should not volunteer for service in the legions and that instead all their efforts should be directed towards the development of a secret Polish army.

A secret Polish military organization (Polska Organizacja Wojskowa, abbreviated as P.O.W.) had been formed at the beginning of 1915 by some infantry officers delegated for the purpose by Pilsudski.²⁵ After the conquest of Congress Poland it became a secret army devoted to the cause of Polish independence. Its largest enrollment was about 14,000 individuals (women were used for secret service) and during its existence over 50,000 soldiers were trained by the organization. It was thoroughly organized and was under the command of Pilsudski. Its existence was known to the German and Austrian authorities, but they were wholly unable to suppress it.

On July 25, 1916, Pilsudski resigned as commander of the legions. His resignation was not accepted for two months because the Austrian authorities feared the effect of his action upon Polish public opinion. Upon the loss of their leader, the legions found themselves transferred to the Austrian Landsturm under the title of Polish auxiliaries. Officers and men insisted upon quitting the legions en masse. On October 6 they were withdrawn from the front. After some time order was restored and the men remained in the service when they realized that the German and Austrian authorities would view their dissolution with scant regret. It is of interest to note that at the very time when Generals Ludendorff and Hoffman favored the granting of concessions to the Poles in order to obtain Polish recruits, they were well aware of the dangers involved in using the legions as the basis of a Polish army.²⁶

The formation of the Provisional Council of State on January 14, 1917, made possible the inclusion of Pilsudski in the administration as chairman of the military commission.²⁷ Little power was granted the commission because the Germans distrusted him. Instead they organized under the governor-general a department for the Polish army (Abteilung fur Polnische Wehrmacht). The Polish leader recognized his inability to exercise any influence on the course of events and quietly waited until circumstances

²⁵Smogorzewski, Pilsudski, pp. 29-30; Handelsman, pp. 316-18. The soldiers who passed through the ranks of this army later constituted the principal body of the army of the Polish Republic.

²⁶Smogorzewski, pp. 40-41, 43; Arz, pp. 327-31.

²⁷Filasiewicz, No. 67, pp. 125-28.

presented an opportunity. This came with the Russian revolution. The collapse of the czarist government, declared Pilsudski, profoundly modified the situation. Poland no longer had an enemy. The Provisional Council of State was asked by the German authorities to publish an appeal to arms. On the demand of Pilsudski it refused to obey the German request. Polish collaboration with the occupants, from the point of view of Pilsudski, presupposed the existence of two conditions: (1) the army must be truly Polish; (2) the Polish army must be used only on the eastern front.

On July 2 Pilsudski resigned his position in the government.²⁸ A few days later the Provisional Council at the suggestion of General von Beseler formulated an oath which was to be taken by the legionaires. Pilsudski secretly instructed them to refuse the oath and on the appointed days, July 9-11, only eight hundred of a total of six thousand were willing to swear allegiance to the occupation authorities. All who refused the oath were arrested, disarmed, and interned at the camps of Szczypioro (soldiers) and Benjaminow (officers). Finally, on July 22 Pilsudski and his associate Colonel Sosnkowski were arrested and by September were incarcerated for the remainder of the war at Magdeburg. It was locking the barn after the horse was stolen. All efforts on the part of the Central Powers to bring volunteers into the reconstructed Hilfskorps were futile. Three days after the arrest of Pilsudski the card house of the Polish Kingdom fell with the resignation of the Provisional Council of State.

As we have seen, the failure of their policy led the Central Powers to grant further concessions to the Poles. On September 12, 1917, the constitution of the regency government was promulgated.²⁹ On the following November 26 a ministry was formed³⁰ and on February 6, 1918, it was announced that a council of state would be elected.³¹ Gradually the regency government acquired the role of leadership in opposition to the policy of the Central Powers. The Kucharzewski ministry, favorable and willing to co-operate with the occupation authorities, resigned on learning the provisions of Brest-Litovsk. Even the Council of Regency, swayed by Polish opinion, announced on February 14 that the source and support of its authority was to be found only in the Polish nation. In other words, the puppet kingdom which had been created by the German and Austrian leaders in order that they might tap the vast reservoir of "human material" in Poland for their armies,

²⁸Ibid., No. 107, pp. 201-2; Smogorzewski, pp. 50-54.

²⁹Filasiewicz, Nos. 123-24, pp. 230-34.

³⁰Ibid., No. 144, pp. 270-72.

³¹Ibid., No. 179, pp. 342-46.

gradually became the agency whereby the sentiment of the people and parties were directed towards national unity. The dissolution of the legions and the imprisonment of Pilsudski had strengthened the regency government by making it the only important center for political agitation. In the spring of 1918 the government of the regency with Jean Steczkowski as chief minister entered actively into the role that circumstances assigned to it.

Steczkowski became president of the Polish cabinet on April 5, 1918.³² He accepted the office only after he had carefully explained his position to the leaders of the different political groups in Poland. His program included many of the points previously enunciated by leaders of the various shades of Polish opinion. The transfer of the different branches of the administration at an early date into Polish hands; the formation of a conscript army with Polish officers under the command of General von Eeseler but to be employed only with the approbation of a Polish legislative body; the extension of the kingdom eastward and in particular to include Chelm; the convocation of the council of state immediately after the elections; the repatriation of refugees with the financial aid of the Central Powers; the abandonment of the charges against the legionaires--these were the planks of the platform on which he proposed to establish his administration. Only the parties of "activism" were willing to support the new government. The parties of the left adopted an attitude of "expectant indifference," and the Political Club of Parties agreed only to what they called an "objective collaboration with the Council of State." In consequence the program of the new government when it was published in the official journal was only a vague outline of the points previously given, but it is worthy of note that the occupation authorities were able to compel explicit emphasis on a statement that the new government was being established in strict accord with the Central Powers.

Thus in outward conformity to the occupation authorities Steczkowski was, nevertheless, unknown to the Polish party leaders, demanding that the Central Powers grant the Poles extensive concessions.³³ These demands, he argued, should be granted as soon as possible in order to reassure the Polish people and to win their support for his government and to check their constant attacks on his government for its dependence on Germany. On April 29, 1918, he requested that the Polish state be assured immediately of "the independence, and integrity of the territory of Congress

³²Filasiewicz, No. 209, pp. 430-35; Handelsman, pp. 196-98.

³³Filasiewicz, No. 209, p. 435.

Poland; the rectification of the frontier with Ukraina, conforming to strategic necessities; some compensations in the districts ethnographically Polish to the east of the Narew-Bohr-Niemen line for the loss of the four northern districts of the government of Suwalki; finally, the possibility of economic development by the conclusion of a commercial convention guaranteeing, among other items, access to the sea." The Central Powers ignored his request.³⁴ His open platform of a Polish government for Poles was declared by the governor-general impossible of realization. There were no experienced Poles to whom the various branches of the administration might be given.

In the meantime, the struggle for the control of the Polish army continued. A law for conscription which had been prepared by the Polish government remained a dead letter because it necessitated the intervention of the regency, and the German authorities were not willing to give to that "sovereign power" direct influence in military affairs.³⁵ On May 8 the governor-general of Warsaw withdrew the control of the Polish army from the Council of Regency. The Oberost proceeded forthwith to disband the various Polish volunteer corps which, composed of ex-soldiers from the Russian forces, menaced the German control along the east border because of their claim of being the army of the Polish nation.³⁶ Three days later the first armed conflict between

³⁴Blociszewski, pp. 108, 119.

³⁵Ibid., p. 108.

³⁶Handelsman, pp. 318-23; Filasiewicz, No. 182, p. 356; No. 192, pp. 382-85; No. 193, pp. 386-88; No. 204, pp. 417-20; No. 209, p. 429; No. 214, pp. 448-51; No. 219, pp. 457, 459-61; No. 220, pp. 461-63. On June 21, 1917, after the dissolution of the Russian army, there was formed a Supreme Council for Polish soldiers which recommended the creation of armed corps in order to exploit the possibilities of the war for the restoration of an independent Polish state. Three Polish corps were organized. By June, 1917, the First Corps contained 2500 soldiers and 150 officers. By January, 1918, it consisted, according to Handelsman, of 29,000 men. The Second Corps was organized in December, 1917, and was able to have its numbers augmented by the addition of two regiments of legionaires who crossed the frontier after the treaty of Brest Litovsk in March, 1918. It was this corps which was surrounded on May 11 by the German army at Kanlow and eventually forced to capitulate when its munitions were exhausted. A Third Corps was organized in Ukraina. The hostility of the Ukrainians who cooperated with the Central Powers led to its dispersal.

the Poles and the forces of the Central Powers took place at Kaniow, and in the months of June and July all of the Polish volunteer corps were disbanded.

During the month of June the Steczkowski government was forced into further subserviency to the occupation authorities. On June 3, as we have seen, the Entente Powers attempted to bring their enemies to submission, by issuing a proclamation³⁷ which, with other propaganda, they hoped would destroy the allegiance of the subject peoples to the Central Powers. To the Poles the Allied governments declared: "The creation of a united and independent Polish state, with free access to the sea, constituted one of the conditions for a firm and just peace and of the rule of justice in Europe." The reply of the Steczkowski government, obviously dictated by the German authorities, reiterated its previous statement that the destiny of Poland would be achieved in close accord with the Central Powers. This pronouncement was immediately disavowed by the principal agencies of Polish opinion, the political clubs and parties. The Polish question, declared the critics of the administration, could be solved only in cooperation with the Entente. Nevertheless, despite the criticism launched against him, Steczkowski and his associates were honestly striving to obtain a greater degree of self-government for the Poles. As we have seen, two members of his government, Prince Radziwill and Count Roniker, within the fortnight following June 3 appeared at Berlin and Vienna in an attempt to win a "definitive organization" for the Polish state. Steczkowski's desire was the more urgent because of the knowledge that his government would be severely criticised on the opening of the Council of State. He hoped to be able to present the Council of State some concession from the Central Powers as the fruit of his administration. On that account he was willing to postpone the meeting of the council. At the same time the German government desired to present this first representative body of the new Poland with a fait accompli in regard to the dissolution of the Polish army corps. For these reasons the first meeting of the Council of State, fixed for May 20, did not take place until June 22.

Over nine months had elapsed since the Poles had been promised a Council of State, elected by themselves, and it was over twenty months since they had been promised representative government. This delay was not a matter of chance, but it was on account of the belief held by the German statesmen that the granting of representation to the Polish people would merely strengthen the Polish opposition. The correctness of this assumption on the

³⁷Filasiewicz, No. 222, pp. 465-66.

part of the occupation authorities was apparent from the opening session of the Council of State.³⁸ In the four meetings of the first session the members of the Council attacked both the Steczkowski government and the Central Powers. The "activists" were hardly less severe than the "passivists." The trial of the Galician legionnaires interned in Hungary; the forced requisitions; the sale to a Viennese concern of a wood-cutting concession for fifteen years on the state lands of the Austrian zone; the condemnation of a number of persons (some of whom had been severely beaten) for speaking against the peace of Brest-Litovsk; the harsh censorship of the journals; all these matters were openly discussed and criticized.³⁹

The German government was soon on the defensive.⁴⁰ The demands of the war, the German leaders argued, made necessary the conditions of which the Poles complained. It was impossible to give the Polish government control of the administration so long as those needs had to be met. From argument the German government turned to threat. In mid-July Count Lerchenfeld-Koefering, the German commissioner at Warsaw, called the attention of the regency to the manner in which the Council of State comprehended its role. He expressed the hope that this "tribune" would not become the center for agitation against the Central Powers, and he added that he would find himself in a "difficult situation," if his advice were not followed. This attempt to intimidate the Poles was of little avail as the news of the failures of the German armies on the western front became generally known. In fact, the fourteen sessions of the Council of State (besides numerous committee meetings) made possible the development of the Council of State into what the Germans called "ein Sprechsaal für polnische öffentliche Meinung."⁴¹

On July 31 the Council of State adjourned to meet again on September 3. As we have seen, the month of August, 1918, was a period of active discussion between Warsaw, Vienna, and Berlin.⁴² Polish representatives, Prince Radziwill and Count Roniker, were busily urging a greater degree of independence for the Polish government. The German leaders recognized the need of settlement before the peace negotiations began with the Entente. Steczkowski and his associates hoped to be able to show some tangible gain before the reconvening of the Council of State. At the same time

³⁸ Ibid., pp. 479-88; Blociszewski, pp. 166-68.

³⁹ Filasiewicz, Nos. 229-30, pp. 489-90.

⁴⁰ Handelsman, p. 204.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid., p. 205; Filasiewicz, No. 248, pp. 519-24.

his critics launched one attack after another. His government was reproached for having an "orientation berlinoise." The "passivists" announced that they were preparing a series of interpellations to be used against the ministry when the Council of State resumed its work. Even the "activists" refused to support the administration. Under these circumstances, the position of the cabinet became untenable. Steczkowski, ill, handed in his resignation. The regency accepted it, and at the same time (September 5) prorogued the Council of State.

Steczowski had failed in carrying out the program which he had announced on his acceptance of the office of first minister of the Polish state.⁴³ He had tried to bring Polish and German points of view together and to work out the destiny of Poland in a common accord. The time was past for compromises. Success was henceforth to be with those who strengthened their position by using the rising force of Polish nationalism. Yet his work was not without permanent result. Modes of procedure in legislation and administration had been developed. The cabinet had become the center of supreme authority and had defined the powers of the Council of Regency as well as the other agencies of the administration. It had published rules for the service of state servants. The department of public instruction and cults had been enlarged by the addition of a council of fine arts and a bureau for the state archives. Within this department, the training of teachers had been determined upon, a plan for primary instruction had been projected, and a law fixing the relation between church and state was originated. Other projects of the administration consisted of a statistical office, an agricultural council, the adoption of principles for the estimation of war damages, the establishment of a war credits bank, the establishment of an office for the protection of war prisoners, an ordinance for the repatriation of small landowners, a council of repatriation, a course of training for fabric inspectors, the organization of a bureau on communication under the ministry of industry and commerce, and a census of Poles fighting in the war. With the exception of the departments of public instruction and justice, whose normal development was checked by the interference in July of the German authorities, the basis for all departments had been laid in rough outline ready for completion in the future.

On September 9 the Council of Regency asked the former premier, Jean Kucharzewski, to form a new ministry.⁴⁴ On September 14 Austria-Hungary proposed a meeting with the Entente for a discussion of peace terms, but it was clearly indicated that

⁴³Handelsman, pp. 209-11.

⁴⁴Filasiewicz, No. 248; pp. 519-24; No. 264, pp. 547-57.

Poland would not be admitted as one of the "contracting" parties. This omission provoked so much agitation in Poland that Kucharzewski hesitated to undertake the formation of a new government. Finally, on September 22 he announced his readiness to become premier. Subsequent events, however, gave scant encouragement to the new ministry. On September 24, a new series of discussions on the Polish question was inaugurated by the Central Powers, yet the Polish government was not invited to participate. Moreover, when on October 4 Prince Max of Baden accepted the peace conditions of the Entente, Austria attempted to return once more to the Austro-Polish solution by announcing that the basis of her relations with Poland in the future would be that of unity with the monarchy. But the Poles were no longer interested in union with the Habsburg state. By October, 1918, their desires could only be satisfied by independence. Consequently, when on October 7, Kucharzewski announced that his program consisted in the establishment of an autonomous, independent Polish state, it was received with a wave of enthusiasm which swept over all Poland.

The month of October, 1918, was crowded with events of great significance for the development of the new Poland,⁴⁵ but, as we have seen, there was no significant change in the Polish policy of the Central Powers. Among the Poles there was little unity as to program or method. The Council of Regency regretted the rising power of the cabinet. Kucharzewski soon resigned, and the ministry of Joseph Swiezynski replaced his administration. But this legal government could not bring unity. Opposed to it there arose on November 7 a revolutionary government at Lublin. The release of Pilsudski from imprisonment at Magdeburg occurred two days later, but on his return to Warsaw he found the Germans with a powerful and well-organized military force under General Hoffman still thoroughly entrenched in Poland. On November 9 General Beseler announced the end of the regime of occupation. On November 11 and 14 the regency granted full and "unique" power to Pilsudski.⁴⁶

The month of October was, however, not without some constructive achievements in the field of administration.⁴⁷ The railroads were placed under a new ministry of communication. A ministry of war was created, and volunteers were encouraged to enter the army. A general staff was formed with General Rozwadowski as chief. The office of commander-in-chief was not filled, however, for public opinion demanded the appointment of General

⁴⁵Ibid., No. 264, pp. 547-57.

⁴⁶Handelsman, p. 250.

⁴⁷Ibid., pp. 245-47.

Pilsudski to that position. By the end of October the Polish army was in active process of formation with the enrollment of officers and soldiers from the various Polish military corps which had been organized during the war and with the enrollment of students from the schools and universities. In fact, by November 11 much of the administration of the new Polish government was actively functioning. Independence seemed assured and government possible. There remained only the problem of unity.

3. The Burden of the Occupation

To assess the significance of the Teutonic occupation of Poland in terms of political and economic values requires a statement of gains as well as of losses, for the occupation brought benefits of no inconsiderable value. As we have seen, the development of the governmental organization was very rapid during the last six months of the war. But the greatest good which Poland derived from its conquerors was in economic and social matters.

In the three and three-quarters years of the occupation the Germans resurfaced and broadened 4,500 kilometers of macadamized highways and constructed 2,600 kilometers of new highway. In the Austrian zone no exact statement is available but many highways were rebuilt and repaired. In both zones a large number of bridges were built or rebuilt as the old bridges were wrecked on the retreat of the Russians in 1915 from the area. River transportation was improved by both general-governments, and regular steamer lines were established on the Vistula. The railways, which had been damaged by the Russians, were not only reconstructed but double-tracked in many cases with the standard gauge. Telegraph and telephone lines were rebuilt and extended.⁴⁸

Similarly, Polish industry was developed and became of great importance during the last years of the war.⁴⁹ The textile factories and iron foundries of Warsaw had been destroyed by the Russians on their retreat and the Dombrowa had been devastated in 1914 by the Central Powers in order to prevent the Russians from obtaining any value from the mines. Only two small mines had remained untouched. The restoration of the mines was begun immediately and in the last two years of the war reached sixty to seventy per cent of peace time production. The chemical and iron industries were not only restored but developed by the German and Austrian administrations. The textile and other industries, how-

⁴⁸Kries, Preussische Jahrbücher, CCXXXVIII, pp. 132-35; Kerchnawe, p. 32.

⁴⁹Kries, Preussische Jahrbücher, CCXXXVIII, p. 147.

ever, languished because of the lack of raw materials.

Another service rendered by the authorities of occupation was the supervision of health conditions and the giving of medical service to the people.⁵⁰ Vaccination, quarantine, and hospitalization were methods used to check the spread of disease and to guard against epidemics. Similarly, the care of animals was organized, but there was little cooperation from the inhabitants who frequently refused to report diseased animals.

The development of schools was another benefit derived by the inhabitants of Congress Poland from the occupation.⁵¹ The schools in Poland before the war had been at best means whereby the process of Russification might be facilitated. The German schools were used as a model, and while no great degree of efficiency was attained, the standard set by the schools established by the occupation authorities was higher than what had been previously known in the area.

In the general-government of Lublin the schools were administered by the Schulrat, who was appointed by the AOK. In January, 1917, a rabbi was made associate advisor for the Jewish schools and religion. In each district the control of the schools was exercised by the commander. The Polish language was used as the language of instruction except in the areas where the majority of the inhabitants spoke Ukrainian. School buildings were repaired and built with timber obtained from the state forests and the necessary funds were derived from taxes levied for such purposes. The response was gratifying, as the number of public schools increased from approximately thirteen hundred in December, 1915, to over thirty-two hundred in November, 1917, while the enrollment increased at the same time from 145,000 to 295,000. A similar increase occurred in the number and enrollment of the private schools.

In the German zone schools were held only in limited areas during the winter and spring of 1916. In the autumn of 1916, however, most of the schools were reestablished. German school men became head administrators in the districts. The need for elementary teachers was partly met by the use of men and women drawn from the inhabitants of the area. Russian was the language of instruction in the primary and secondary schools. On this account more private than public secondary schools were established in 1917 and 1918. The Warsaw high school, the University of Warsaw and the Warsaw technical high school had been russianized be-

⁵⁰Ibid., pp. 140-41; Kerchnawe, pp. 18, 22.

⁵¹Kerchnawe, p. 17; Kries, Preussische Jahrbücher, CCXXXIII, pp. 142-45.

fore the war and were only slightly patronized by the Poles. In 1914 seventy per cent of the students in these three Warsaw schools were Russian. Almost immediately after the German occupation of Warsaw the Warsaw schools were reopened. Polish was adopted as the language of instruction. The instructors were usually Polish although German and Austrian instructors were frequently used. The courses were as much as possible of a non-political nature. It was hoped that the Polish youth of Warsaw would become so interested in intellectual activities, that they would refrain from politics. The enrollment increased very rapidly but the hope that the students would abstain from political activity was not realized. Instead the Warsaw schools became hotbeds for anti-German agitation and propaganda. As a result these schools were closed by the German authorities.⁵²

Another service, although in some cases it proved to be a mixed blessing, was the provision made by the German and Austrian authorities for caring for the religious needs of the people. In the Austrian zone a priest was provided for every two thousand or more communicants. Supervisory control was maintained through the bishops, and the relationships with the papacy was handled by the Austrian foreign ministry. Although reserved, the attitude of the Catholic clergy was generally favorable to the occupation. This attitude was also usually adopted by the various religious orders. In the German area an attempt was made in the spring of 1917 to germanize the Evangelical church. Vigorous opposition arose, and outspoken protests were made by Protestant leaders from all sections of Poland. Only one arrest, however, was made, and this resulted in a very light punishment when the German government recognized the agitation which would result should a heavy sentence be imposed. The Jews were granted full religious liberty in both areas of occupation.⁵³

Accompanying the varied services rendered by the occupation authorities, there was a policy of exploitation, a policy frankly admitted by the leaders of Germany and Austria. At the beginning of the war an attempt was made to cloak the exploitation of Poland with the guise of humanitarianism; the Central Powers were delivering the Poles from the terrible yoke of the Muscovite. As the war continued, the Poles began to feel that they had only exchanged masters. The Germans were more systematic than the Russians had been and on that account the oppression of the people was greater than it had been under Russian rule. Eventually the Germans maintained that exploitation was necessary in

⁵²Kries, Preussische Jahrbücher, CCXXXIII, p. 145.

⁵³Kerchnawe, pp. 15-16; Handelsman, pp. 114-18.

order to win the war.⁵⁴

The control of the government by the Central Powers meant the control of the means of exchange in Poland.⁵⁵ The occupation of Russian Poland had cut off Polish relations with the central Russian bank of issue. The immediate result was a scarcity of currency, which first appeared in the larger cities and industrial areas. The inhabitants of these districts tried to meet the need through the issuance of checks and other negotiable instruments. Eventually there arose a desire for a bank of issue for Poland. The Germans were interested in a similar organization as German currency was flowing rapidly into the occupied zone. The result was the organization of a bank, whose issues were stabilized by the guarantee of the military authorities that payment would be made at the close of the war in German marks. In the Austrian area, Austrian currency was adopted and private individuals were granted the banking rights for the area under government license. All currency transactions, however, were rigidly supervised and regulated by the military government. Payments of gold to anyone outside of the territory was forbidden, and foreign payments of any kind could be made only when bills of exchange were purchased from persons duly authorized for that purpose by the military authorities.⁵⁶ Finally, it is to be observed that as the currencies of the Central Powers became more and more inflated, the advantages thus derived by the military governments in dealing with the inhabitants of the occupied areas were considerable. Requisition promises to pay, bonds, and other instruments of a similar nature lost their value and presently became worthless. In other words, the manipulation of the currencies of the Central Powers in Poland during the war period gave to the powers of occupation the opportunity for a more thorough-going exploitation of the people than would have otherwise been possible.

Another form of exploitation practiced by the Central Powers in Poland during the same period was through the medium of

⁵⁴Handelsman, pp. 24-65. A former German army officer who was with the first corps to enter Warsaw and now a physician in Chicago remarked to the writer: "Of course! It had to be exploitation. We wanted to win the war."

⁵⁵Kries, Preussische Jahrbücher, CCXXXIII, p. 153; Filasiewicz, No. 107, pp. 199-200; Kerchnawe, p. 27.

⁵⁶German Empire. Reichswirtschaftsministerium, Deutsches Handelarchiv Hrsg. im Reichsamt des Innern, Volume for 1916 (Berlin, 1916), p. 54.

taxation.⁵⁷ In the general government of Lublin the taxes of the former Russian administration were retained. Many other taxes were added before the close of the war. In the German area the taxation program of the government was even more thoroughly developed. In both areas a license system was adopted for business, probably in order to regulate business enterprises, but certainly also with the object of increasing the revenues obtained from the people of Poland. Monopolies were created in order that additional revenues might be obtained.⁵⁸ In the Austrian area monopolies of various commodities were granted to private individuals who operated under governmental supervision. In the German administration the tendency was for the monopoly to remain in the hands of the general-government. The success of these policies by the occupation governments is shown by the fact that the Warsaw government was able to collect in one year (1918) by these means (taxes, licenses, and monopolies) a total of 149,000,000 marks.⁵⁹

Additional revenue was derived from the Russian crown lands and other state property which had been confiscated by the German and Austrian authorities on the conquest of Russian Poland.⁶⁰ The combined revenues of the region made possible a much greater budget than had been known before the war. Austrian figures are not available, but in the German area alone the total for the year 1918 amounted to 295,000,000 marks. Of this amount 150,000,000 marks was appropriated for the use of the army of occupation. The remainder was divided between the German and Polish administrations, the latter receiving only about thirty million marks. Admitting the increased cost of government, Kries defends the German administration by explaining that in the German budget the army expenses were included which had formerly been borne by the Russian government.

The administration of the economic resources of the area was another means used by the occupying authorities for the ex-

⁵⁷Ibid., Volume for 1915, pp. 807-10; Volume for 1916 (Warsaw), pp. 250, 251, 252, 554, 655, 778, 779, 782, 869, 870, 993, 1241 and (Lublin) 138, 336, 338, 342, 455, 1246, 1248, 1250; Volume for 1917 (Warsaw), pp. 116, 249, 254, 369, 415, 416, 534, 536, 912, 1059 and (Lublin), 249, 372-73.

⁵⁸Ibid., Volume for 1916, p. 558 (Lublin-sugar); Volume for 1917, pp. 256-57 (Lublin-petroleum), 696 (Lublin-salt); Volume for 1918, p. 196 (Warsaw-salt and Lublin-wine monopoly).

⁵⁹Kries, Preussische Jahrbücher, CCXXXIII, pp. 151-52.

⁶⁰Ibid., pp. 153-54.

exploitation of Russian Poland. A rigid control of production, consumption, and transportation was established.⁶¹ Laws prohibiting export and import were promulgated, and final authority in economic matters was placed in the hands of the military command (i.e., the governor-general of Warsaw and the AOK). A detailed account of the Austrian administration will serve to make clear the effectiveness of the control established in both areas.

All commercial, industrial, and agricultural undertakings were placed under a special committee for economic matters, seated in Lublin and, after January, 1918, known as the Wirtschaftssek-tion.⁶² Subordinated to and associated with this central authority were the various organizations (committees, etc.) which dealt with the specific phases of economic control. One of the more important of these specialized bureaus was the transportation commission located at Cracow. It was affiliated with the Austrian government by means of a special representative at Vienna. The transportation administration maintained local offices and distributing points at Cracow, Radom, Rzeszow, and Lwow. Another branch of the administration was concerned with the administration of the state forests and other state property. Sub-offices were established in each district. Agricultural production was handled directly by the Wirtschaftssektion. Railways, postal and telegraph services were administered by the military authorities. A military officer was also named by the AOK as the administrator of the Dombrowa mines. The machinery of control in all of the various branches which have been described was coordinated by means of inspectors who were appointed by the Wirtschaftssektion. These men became veritable czars of industry and agriculture within their sphere of control.

The lack of foodstuffs placed an emphasis upon agricultural production from the very beginning of the occupation.⁶³ In consequence, in the spring of 1915 several landowners of prominence were appointed in each community to serve as agricultural advisors (Anbaukommando). Seed, fertilizers, machinery, draft animals, and labor was furnished by the district commanders. The use of the first harvest was regulated by an ordinance issued in June, 1915. All sale was forbidden except to the district commander. Cereals which could be milled were requisitioned, and receipts were given at the current price; after December 1 the

⁶¹Wolfgang von Kries, "Die wirtschaftliche Ausnutzung des Generalgouvernements Warschau," Preussische Jahrbücher, CCXXXV (1934), pp. 237-39.

⁶²Kerchnawe, p. 12.

⁶³Ibid., pp. 36, 42-43.

victim of the requisition was obliged to accept an acknowledgment of indebtedness at only half the current price. In 1916 in addition to its duties of the previous year the Anbaukommando handled the labor problems which arose. The distribution ordinance of June, 1916, provided not only for the harvesting of the crops but also for the rationing of meal, bread, potatoes, fats, sugar, and meat. For the autumn of 1916 planting showed a decline which was regained by the increase in the spring of 1917. By this time specific quotas had been established for the production of the different areas, but in order to obtain the amounts demanded military contingents were required. This forcible seizure of agricultural products occasioned much bitter resentment on the part of the people.

To overcome the opposition of the Polish people Count Szeptycki, as we have seen, was placed at the head of the administration.⁶⁴ In June, 1917, he reorganized the administration of production, entrusting it to civilians. Three centers (grain, legumes and seeds, and fodder) for control, each with a ruling commissioner, were established. The new scheme of administration failed. There was a general deficiency in production. Smuggling increased. Thereupon the AOK resumed control and tried to force production. Quotas were reestablished. Rationing was universally adopted. There were mealless days and meatless and potatoless meals. Fuel was likewise limited. It became necessary to establish public kitchens and baths for the poor. The people, groveling in their misery, hated the regime which claimed to be freeing them from oppression while taking the very bread from their mouths. Passive resistance was adopted and resulted in lowering production to one-third of previous years.⁶⁵

The AOK in a similar manner attempted to control the production of mining and smelting.⁶⁶ Factories were regimented in order to increase production. A few new factories and distilleries were established. Lumbering was increased, and before a rational forest economy could be developed many of the state forests were devastated. Rising prices led to strikes by the railroad employees and miners. In June, 1918, a crisis developed in industry because the strikes in the Dombrowa made necessary the shipment of all coal from Austria-Hungary.⁶⁷

A description of the German administration of Warsaw would be in many respects a repetition of what has been given concern-

⁶⁴Ibid., pp. 43-48.

⁶⁵Ibid., pp. 43-48.

⁶⁶Ibid., pp. 25-26.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 26; Arz, pp. 232-34.

ing the Austrian administration. Similar methods were used, and because of greater efficiency in the administration greater results were achieved. There was less resistance and in consequence production was greater.

The German historian⁶⁸ of the Warsaw administration contends, however, that there was no exploitation beyond what was absolutely necessary in order to supply the war demands. To him the record of the administration is "no black page in German history." Others are less confident. A letter written by an Austrian official to another official of the same government may be quoted to the contrary:

"The manner in which the requisitions in Poland were carried out gives the impression that Polish industry was intentionally destroyed, as for instance when valuable machines were ruined for the sake of the quite insignificant metal or leather parts, and by the reckless way in which these were detached. The requisitions have not been paid for. And now the reconstruction of Polish industry is to be made impossible. That is obviously the intention; everything else is a pretext. But it is certain that such proceedings will evoke the greatest hostility toward Germany and toward ourselves. Moreover, we should have united to us a ruined country, which we could not help to raise and from which we could receive nothing economically or financially."⁶⁹

The utilization of Polish resources by the Central Powers included also the use of the "human material."⁷⁰ The mobilization of the labor resources came as a result of general demand for labor an outgrowth in turn of the long duration of the war. Laborers were at first employed in their home communities and at times on their own land. In 1915 the AOK set up a civil works division. Labor volunteers at first exceeded the work available, and unrest resulted when Russian agents spread the report that the unemployed would be recruited for army service. These fears were eventually quieted when regulations were adopted that laborers should not be taken any distance except when there was a spe-

⁶⁸Kries, Preussische Jahrbücher, CCXXXV, pp. 221-48.

⁶⁹Gratz and Schüller, pp. 242-44. German edition, p. 300. Taken from letters exchanged by Baron Wiesner, Minister of Commerce, Dr. Richard Schüller, Sektionschef in the Ministry of Commerce, and Dr. Gustav Gratz, Sektionschef of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the dates January 10 and 14, 1918. The account is not clear as to which date is correct for the section quoted.

⁷⁰Kerchnawe, p. 19.

cial need of labor in their particular trade. In the German area⁷¹ Polish labor was used particularly in the public works projects, employing, it is estimated, as many as fifty thousand laborers at one time on the highways and other constructions. There is no accurate record available, but it is estimated that, by the end of 1917, 700,000 Polish laborers had been employed by the German government alone.⁷²

Poles were also drawn into the service of the armies of the Central Powers. It has been estimated that in all Poland 3,376,680 Poles were mobilized for the war by the Austrian, German, or Russian armies.⁷³ Of this number 387,572 lost their lives and 786,365 were wounded.⁷⁴

The burden of the war on Poland can be stated in human terms only when one considers that Congress Poland entered the war with a population of approximately thirteen million people and four years later barely ten million remained.⁷⁵ War casualties, deportations by Russia as well as by Germany, disease, starvation, and the declining birth rate are the causes cited for this diminution of the Polish people.

It may be contended that the burden of war could probably have been endured by a subjected people if in other respects leniency and considerateness had been shown. The Germans, and above all the Prussians, possessed before the war a reputation for brusque and energetic action and for imposing upon others minute prescriptions and interdictions insupportable by a people unaccustomed to being directed in an autocratic manner. Within the area of occupation the Germans exceeded their previous reputation because of the military nature of the government and were closely imitated in their attitude by the Austrian administration. General von Beseler and Bethmann-Hollweg attempted at different times to better conditions by sending letters and circulars to the military officials in which it was urged that better treatment be accorded civilians in Poland in order to check the growing discontent of the Polish people. These suggestions were unheeded by the military administration. Two examples are cited by a Polish historian to give an idea of the manner in which the people of

⁷¹Kries, Preussische Jahrbücher, CCXXXIII, pp. 132-33.

⁷²Filasiewicz, pp. 128-29.

⁷³Handelsman, p. 306.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 311.

⁷⁵Hans Praesent, "Kriegsmassige Volkszählungen im General-gouvernement Warschau und die Bevölkerungszahl in Kongress-Polen," Jahrbücher für National-Oekonomie und Statistik, CXIII (1919), pp. 52-64.

Poland were irritated by the control exercised by the German army. On January 29, 1917, the general staff ordered that the Polish population salute all officers of the German army. This was followed by a notice published at Biala in German, Yiddish, and incomprehensible Polish by which the people were reminded of the previous order and required to remove their hats and in case of meeting an officer in the street to give way to him. Punishment for disobedience was to consist of a fine of six hundred marks or imprisonment for three months. The second incident concerns the communal assembly of Smilowice which protested the brutal treatment accorded the inhabitants of the district, notably in the collection of requisitions and fines. The commune was fined six thousand marks on February 24, 1917, for manifesting an attitude hostile to the military authorities.⁷⁶

Under such circumstances the disappearance of personal liberty is not surprising. The Polish people soon discovered that they were restricted far more than under the Russian regime. A passport was required of all inhabitants over thirteen years who left their homes and travelled in a neighboring district. For a greater distance a special permit was required, subject to a tax and visa.⁷⁷ The ownership of fire arms or weapons of any sort was prohibited, except in some cases where the weapons had a historical or sentimental value. Permits for hunting were issued only by the military commander of the district.⁷⁸

Shortly after the occupation began the authorities began to suppress persons suspected of having hostile opinions.⁷⁹ Accusations of high treason multiplied with great rapidity, especially after the victory of Gorlice, when the Austrians repossessed Galicia. The commanding general, the Archduke Ferdinand, was dubbed "the hangman" by the Polish people, a name previously given to the Russian general, Mouravief, who "after 1863 had wallowed in the blood of Vilna."⁸⁰ In the German area numerous arrests were made for political reasons by both the Warsaw government and the Oberost. The most famous of these arrests was that of Pilsudski and his associate Sosnkowski.⁸¹

Under such conditions freedom of speech, of the press, and of assembly did not exist.⁸² Meetings could be held only with the consent of the authorities. Political meetings could be convoked only on the authorization of the governor-general. Religious meetings could be held when permitted by the authorities

⁷⁶Handelsman, pp. 29, 97-100.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 99.

⁷⁸Kerchnawe, pp. 11-12.

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 15.

⁸⁰Handelsman, p. 28.

⁸¹Ibid., pp. 104-5.

⁸²Lutz, pp. 787-88.

of the church. The press was rigorously regulated and censored.⁸³ The aim was to suppress the hostile press and to sustain a favorable one. The objective of this policy was, according to Cleinow, the official German censor, to restrain the tendency towards the emancipation of the Poles, to combat Austrian influences, and to propagate Germanism in Poland. Cleinow resigned in 1916 but his policy and objective remained in force. By the end of the war the publication of Polish journals was discontinued.

The Austrian administration adopted a policy of strict censorship of the Polish press somewhat later than that inaugurated by the German administration.⁸⁴ This was a result of the general policy of favoritism to the Poles which had been instituted by Francis Joseph. The tendency of the Austrian administration in the later years of the war was, however, one of stricter control over the Polish subjects of the monarchy. The practice of having Polish officials was gradually dropped as, first, Polish-speaking Germans and, later, Germans without any linguistic qualifications were substituted. Leon Bilinski was the only Polish cabinet officer during the war, and he served only until January, 1915. Even the railway administration in Galicia, contrary to former tradition, was transferred from Polish hands. In the government of the conquered area, the administration, largely military, was therefore almost wholly German. It is true that Poles were occasionally appointed to office, as, for example, the appointment of Szeptycki as Polish governor-general at Lublin in the spring of 1917, but the tendency was in the contrary direction. In consequence, it was more difficult for the people to understand the authorities than during the period of Russian control. Theoretically, the privilege of using the Polish language was widely recognized by the Austrian government; practically, German was used as the official language because the chief officials could use no other.⁸⁵

In consequence it must be concluded that the actual administration of Poland was harsh and at times brutal, and of the sort which would lead to resistance on the part of the people who were governed.⁸⁶ The reason, as given by a Prussian deputy, was "that the country may know that we are the masters." The result was the rise of a feeling of antagonism by the Polish people which rendered useless all plans for the annexation of Poland with Polish consent by either Austria or Germany, and which, by unifying

⁸³Handelsman, p. 104.

⁸⁴Kerchnawe, p. 15.

⁸⁵Handelsman, pp. 28, 106-8.

⁸⁶Ibid., pp. 108-14; Batthyany, p. 134.

the Polish people, rendered impossible the success of any plan for the joining of Poland with either of the Central Powers without Polish consent.

4. Conclusion

The conclusion of hostilities on November 11, 1918, made possible a Poland, united, independent, and with free access to the sea. In August, four years before, such an issue had seemed totally impossible. This happy fulfillment of Polish aspirations had been hastened by the destructive forces of the war. The storm and fury of the conflict, indeed, had brought desolation and waste, but it also destroyed many things which had hindered the unity of the Polish people. The occupation contributed to Polish harmony, first, by suppressing particularism and, shortly thereafter, by necessitating unanimity in opposition to the common oppressor. Under these conditions Polish nationalism thrived and presently, like the proverbial mustard, overshadowed the whole land. Two factors accelerated its growth: (1) the inability of the leaders of the Central Powers to formulate a logical policy with regard to the Poles, and (2) the ability of the Poles to utilize to the greatest degree the mistakes and blunders of the hesitant leaders of Germany and Austria-Hungary.

The pre-war Polish policy of Germany with its principles of germanization and cultural assimilation had from the outset rendered any conciliatory action useless before the determined opposition of hostile Polish opinion. Moreover, German policy was vitiated by the indecision which resulted from the divergent aims and interests of military leaders and statesmen. The high command insisted that the German Polish policy should be subordinated at all times to the necessities of the war and of future wars. German statesmen, on the contrary, while not insensible to the pressing demands of the war perceived more clearly the disastrous consequences of failure to conciliate the Poles before the conclusion of hostilities.

Similarly, the government of the Dual Monarchy was a "house divided against itself" in dealing with the Polish problem. The death of the Emperor Francis Joseph in 1916 removed the only individual who had consistently sponsored a policy of Polish favoritism in the internal relationships of the Habsburg state. Unalterably opposed to the policy of the old emperor was the attitude of Hungary-based, the Hungarians believed, on their interests as a nation within the governmental structure of the monarchy. The moving force in the Hungarian government was Count Tisza. A confirmed believer in dualism, he was a vigorous and uncompromis-

ing opponent of any scheme which would in any degree minimize Hungary's position in the monarchy. Yet, he was not blind to the interests of the Vienna government, as is shown in his demand for compensation should Germany be granted full control of Poland. He would, he said, rather give up the German alliance than the Dom-browa. Nevertheless, it was undoubtedly his attitude which rendered nugatory all the efforts of the statesmen of the Dual Monarchy to come to a satisfactory agreement with the Germans on the Polish question. The Polish policy of the Habsburg statesmen was, moreover, narrowly circumscribed by the military leaders in control of Poland. The statesmen might plan, but the actual execution of any policy they might decide upon remained in the hands of the AOK, and every attempt remained futile unless it received the sanction of the high command. And finally, in a far less significant degree, the Polish policy of the Habsburg monarchy was modified by the reaction of the Poles both within the Austrian government and in Galicia.

In the consideration of these factors it becomes evident why the Central Powers were unable to agree on the policy to be followed in their relations with the Poles. Neither government was able to develop a clear-cut program. Every attempt at compromise failed because the government of neither country knew its own desires or wherein compromises might be effected. Half measures and procrastination resulted.

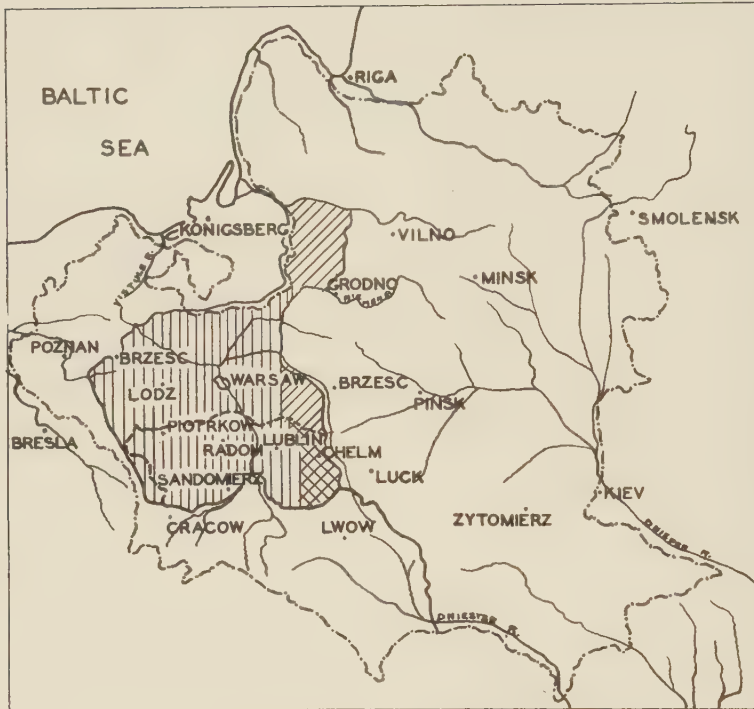
In direct contrast to the ineffectiveness and indecision of the Central Powers was the unanimity of purpose which united the Poles. It is true that there were wide differences of opinion as to the method which should be employed, but with regard to the ultimate aim to be realized there was little dissension. At the outset of the war there was considerable hesitance on the part of the Poles in the expression of their hope for a united and independent state. The suppression following their previous efforts at independence had been too severe. It was the role of Pilsudski and his associates to teach their compatriots the program and the means whereby independence might be realized. Dmowski and his colleagues abroad served the common cause by winning Allied recognition as the necessities of war drove the Entente into the utilization of every factor which might aid in winning a victory over their opponents.

It cannot be proved that, properly handled, the Austrian proposal for a solution of the Polish question would not have been a wise policy for the Central Powers in dealing with the Poles. Certainly the favorable attitude of the Poles of Galicia would lead one to the belief that success might have been expected from the adoption of such a plan. This, however, would have en-

tailed a complete reorganization of the Habsburg state, which under the circumstances was obviously impossible because of the opposition of Hungary. On the other hand, the evidence is clear that the policy of germanization in Polish Prussia had made impossible any solution such as the germanophiles desired. Two other ways were open: (1) a policy of liberality and tolerance, with the possibility of winning the Poles, leaving their final status until the conclusion of peace; or (2) the establishment of Poland on an unlimited basis with the full knowledge that a Poland limited in its political or territorial integrity would furnish difficulties in the future.

As we have seen, a policy of liberality and tolerance toward the Poles was attempted by the Central Powers upon the outbreak of hostilities. The appointment of a Pole to the see of Posen and the friendly attitude of the Vienna government towards the Cracow leaders are examples illustrative of this tendency. Within both governments, however, those opposed to the Poles were successful in obtaining control of the administration to such an extent that shortly after the beginning of the war this tolerant attitude was reversed. From the narrow viewpoint of the Prussian German justification for the adoption of a policy of suppression is to be found in the fear that a liberal administration of the Polish Prussians might lead to the overthrow of German leadership within Prussia and this in turn might mean the loss of Prussian hegemony in the German Empire. Similarly, the Hungarians in insisting on the retention of the dual principle feared the loss of position which might result if the Poles were treated more leniently. The result was the policy of illiberality which because of the hostility which it provoked among the Poles made impossible the postponement of the settlement of the Polish question until the close of the war.

The plan for the establishment of Poland on an unlimited basis was at no time seriously considered. Such suggestions were answered by the German leaders with the argument that Polish weakness was necessary for Prussian strength, and by the Austrians that Polish independence would mean the loss of Galicia. Concessions along these lines were impossible. Neither Polish Prussia nor Galicia could be sacrificed and in the face of such obstacles no proposal for Polish independence could obtain a hearing.



THE CHANGING BOUNDARIES OF POLAND 1772, 1914, 1935

- Polish boundaries in 1772
- Austrian, German, and Russian boundaries which divided Poland in 1914
- Boundary between the German and Austrian zones of occupation
- ▨ Territory of the "Kingdom of Poland"
- ▧ German occupied territory not under the governor-general of Warsaw in 1916
- ▩ Austrian occupied territory not under the governor-general of Lublin in 1916 and given to Ukraina in 1918 at Brest Litovsk

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